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*The Boys of the County School
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PREFACE

THE stories told in this volume are all drawn from well-authenticated books of travel, mostly of the nineteenth century, though a few belong to earlier times. The source of each incident is, as a rule, acknowledged in the text. The author wishes to express his great indebtedness to the authors and publishers of the following books for their kind permission to make use of copyright material:—

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E. Y.

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Note.

The contents of this book have been taken from Mr. Ernest Young's larger and more expensive volume entitled "Adventures among Trappers and Hunters."

CHAPTER I

THE TRIALS OF THE TRAPPER IN THE NORTH AMERICAN WOODS

SOME men go hunting merely for the fun of the thing, and the more dangerous the sport, the more amusing they find it. On the other hand, many men go hunting to get their living, and the more dangerous the sport, the less chance they have of getting rich. In this book we are chiefly concerned with the perils and trials of men who hunt for profit, such as those who trap live animals to sell to circuses and menageries ; those who search for eider-down in Greenland, or ivory in Africa ; those who fish for seals in the icy waters of the far north ; or those who, in the forest and on the prairie, in the swamps and on the mountains, hunt the many creatures whose furs are so valued by people living in cold and temperate climates.

One of the most attractive fields for the hunter is North-Western Canada, a district almost as large as Europe, where are found the deer, moose, elk, and grizzly bear. In the forests, thousands of fur-bearing animals still remain, though men have been busy

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hunting and trapping them for many generations. Among the most important fur-bearing animals of North America are the members of the weasel family, a family which includes the stoat or ermine, the mink, the marten or sable, and the fisher or tree-cat. With the exception of the mink, which is amphibious, they all live among woods and rocks, and spend a great deal of their time in the trees. They are blood-thirsty creatures, capable of attacking and overcoming animals much bigger than themselves. A small weasel, for instance, is sufficiently powerful to be able to destroy an American hare, nearly twenty times its own weight.

The man who goes tiger-hunting runs the risk of being hunted by the tiger, but the fur-trapper, as a rule, has little to fear from creatures like the ermine and the sable. And yet, some of these small creatures, when they have their young ones with them, are exceedingly fierce and courageous. One of the tiniest members of the weasel family is the common weasel, which is only about six inches long. One would think that such a diminutive creature would not be dangerous to man, but, as a matter of fact, it has such a fierce disposition that, if irritated, it will attack almost anything, no matter how big. Only a few years ago, a stone-breaker in Cumberland accidentally disturbed a mother and several young ones, whereupon they attacked him, and left him dead upon the road.

A trapper and a boy were once fishing on the banks of a stream in America, when they came across the burrows of several weasels. The animals were dodging and darting about, scolding away in their usual snappy fashion, and the trapper and his com-

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panion began to strike at them with their fishing-poles to drive them away. But the more the men struck, the less frightened grew the weasels, and in the end the men had to take to their heels, for the little creatures were jumping fiercely around them, and trying to reach their throats.¹

A good idea of the peril to be encountered in trapping such a savage little beast is given by an old trapper who had a strange adventure.² It was on a dark day in September, and the trapper had gone into the woods to shoot grey squirrels. He was standing at the root of a tall maple tree, looking up into the branches at a squirrel that was hiding there, when he heard the sound of rustling leaves and snapping twigs. The noise seemed to him to be in the undergrowth which skirted the stream below, and, as he looked, a large raccoon burst into sight, running almost directly towards him. As the raccoon ran along, it kept pouncing and grabbing at something which turned out to be a weasel. A great hollow beech tree was standing near, and the weasel, dodging and doubling for all he was worth, made for the tree, and, coming to the root, whipped out of sight.

The trapper raised his gun to shoot the raccoon, which was clawing at the hole, quite unconscious that it was in danger of being shot. But before the man could pull the trigger, the weasel popped its head out of another hole three or four feet higher up, and then dropped on the nape of the raccoon's neck. The sharp teeth of the weasel were soon fixed in the skull of its foe, who darted backwards and forwards, snapping vainly at his wily little adversary. Presently they got behind another tree, and the hunter

¹ See *Half Hours in Woods and Wilds*.

² *Ibid.*

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followed to see what would happen. This time, the raccoon caught sight of him and bolted, with the weasel still clinging to it. Thinking all was now over, the hunter went back to the beech tree and began tearing away the rotten wood, where he discovered a nest of young weasels. But before he had had time to take stock of them, he heard a slight rustle behind him. He stepped on one side, and there was the brave little mother who had returned unhurt, ready to do battle again in defence of her children. In another minute she would have had the man by the throat, but he skipped out of her way before she had time to spring.

Sometimes, when the hunter is after the small furry beasts, he meets with a big furry beast whose acquaintance he is not quite so anxious to make. Paul Fountain, the distinguished traveller, says: "I had been out looking for small game, and was some distance away from our camping place in a piece of rocky ground, with a stream of water in front and a swamp on the right. I had not expected to meet with any large animal as there were no tracks of deer in the neighbourhood, and bears never entered my thoughts; yet when returning I came suddenly on a very large black bear which was busy devouring blackberries, and also beetles; for I saw him turning over stones and detached pieces of rock in search of them and eagerly scratching them out of crevices. He was not nearly a hundred yards off when I first saw him; and though I was walking rather carelessly at the time, he neither saw nor heard me. I came to a sudden halt, rather startled, I must own, for this was the first wild bear I had ever seen, and it at once occurred to me that I was very poorly armed for an

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encounter with such an animal. I had a gun loaded with small shot and a pair of heavy pistols without which I never moved ; but pistols were scarcely fit weapons with which to attack a bear, though they carried balls averaging twenty-five to the pound weight.

“The bear was slowly advancing towards me, and I was compelled to retreat ; for the space between the brook and the swamp was so narrow that I could not risk an attempt to pass the bear. I tried to ford the brook, but not only did the water come above the waist before I reached the middle, but the bottom was a treacherous quicksand, and I had to get out of it hastily, after a narrow escape of sticking fast. The swamp was quite impassable.

“The bear continually elevated his muzzle and sniffed the air, and I thought that he smelt two or three ducks which I had recently killed. I therefore took them from my belt and threw them down, hoping to gain time ; and as I retired I drew the shot from my gun and substituted two bullets in each barrel, with six drams of powder behind them. The bullets I fortunately made it a habit always to carry with me in case I should meet with deer.

“I saw the bear stop to maul the ducks, and congratulating myself on the ruse which had succeeded in delaying him, I hastened to get round the swamp. The bear must have caught sight of me, for suddenly he came after me with surprising nimbleness. I cannot say what my feelings were, but a sort of furious fear took possession of me and stimulated me to strive to save my life. I fired full at the bear's chest when he was about twenty paces from me. He fell, but got up again, as I have noticed that animals

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often do when merely shot through the lungs, and blood was dripping from his mouth. I realised, on the spur of the moment, that nothing but coolness could make my last poor chance a winning one. My aim was desperately sure. The head of the bear was not six feet from the muzzle of the gun when I fired the second barrel and killed him instantly. In fact, the head was shattered, and part of the brain blown out. What a sigh of relief I gave ! I think I realised the feelings of a bird when it escapes the trap ; of a fly when it breaks from the web in the nick of time to escape the rushing spider."

At certain seasons of the year the mosquito is almost as dangerous as some of the larger animals. In one of his excursions, an old trapper met a young man who had incautiously ventured into the woods without adequate protection against mosquitoes. The blood was streaming from his face, where he had been bitten, and his general aspect was so forlorn that he would have moved the soul of any one to pity him. The trapper gave him a kind of ointment to rub upon his face, and, later on, when he met the young man once more, the latter did not hesitate to remark, "You saved my life." That the mosquitoes in these northern regions are really as bad as this is borne out by a statement made by the famous traveller Mr. Harry de Windt. He says that those who have not visited Alaska in the summer time can form no conception of the sufferings inflicted by these pests. Until the traveller gets accustomed to the annoyance, he can neither talk, eat, nor sleep. He tells us that he has camped out after a hard day's work, famished with hunger, yet unable to raise a mouthful of food to his lips, owing to the persistent onslaughts of these

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creatures, who are indeed one of the greatest curses of this great northern land. Even the Indians suffer tortures from May until September, but their bodies are smeared with rancid oil, and the smell affords them a protection denied to the white man. A Yukon mosquito will torture a dog to death in a few hours, and will frequently drive bears and deer into the water. There is no remedy. De Windt and his companions kept a damp rag smouldering all night in the tent, but while the smoke nearly suffocated them, it had little or no effect on their tiny enemies. An Irish miner, who occupied one tent they visited, was lying prone on the ground, face downwards, his supper untouched beside him. The man had been there only two hours, but his hands and face were swollen to twice their natural size, for he was unprovided with mosquito netting. They found it impossible to move without the protection of gloves and veils, and even these sometimes only afforded them a slight protection. As one old stager humorously remarked, the mosquitoes of the north are "as big as rabbits, and bite at both ends." It is stated by experienced trappers that the mosquito rarely attacks old habitants of the wood, but prefers something young and tender.

The fur-trapper's patience is often severely tried by animals from which he incurs little danger in the ordinary course of his occupation. The ermine and the sable, when caught in his traps, will often bite off their tails and so spoil the market value of their skins. The trappers say that the animals do this out of spite.

Then, it is a well-known fact that almost all these creatures have a very objectionable smell. One

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animal that is trapped for its fur, the skunk, has two glands in its body from which it can pour out, at will, streams of liquid of an extremely evil odour.¹ In one of his journeys a fur-trapper, named Thacker, who was accompanied by a friend and a dog, took up his residence in an old wooden shanty. One day the dog scented something under the floor of the shanty, which they thought must be a mink. So they began hurriedly tearing up the floor to give the dog a chance to get at the animal. Up came one plank after another, in quick succession, when, all at once, the dog made a tremendous lunge right into the midst of seven nearly full-grown skunks. In less than a minute the air was filled with the most horrible stench. The dog was soon nearly choked and blinded by the showers of stifling spray that met him at every charge, and, for the time being, all were obliged to make a hasty retreat into the open air. But as they had all by this time suffered so much, and the furs were of some value, they agreed to make another attack, and finish up the work they had so enthusiastically begun. Armed with long clubs, the two men returned to the fray. With the help of the dog, they soon despatched the foe, and retreated to windward to get clear of the stench. For several days afterwards everything tasted or smelt of skunk.

The skunk annoys the trapper by getting into traps set for more valuable and less offensive animals, and when the trapper tries to get him out, he defends himself in the way described above. A fur-dealer once offered a trapper two shillings each for skunks, and the trapper saved up a number, but after skinning five he gave up the business in disgust.

¹ From *The Trapper's Guide*. Newhouse.

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Among the animal foes of the trapper are two fur-bearing creatures called the fisher and the wolverine or glutton. The first of these gets its name on account of its habit of stealing the fish that the trappers use as bait, and the other on account of its enormous appetite. Of the two, the wolverine is the bigger pest, for it follows the trapper as he sets his traps, and, as soon as he has gone away, creeps up and steals the bait; or perhaps he waits till a fox or other animal is in the trap, when he makes his meal off that. An old Indian complained to Mr. Ross of the Hudson's Bay Company that he could hunt no furs because the wolverine ate the martens and the bait, and smashed the traps. He set a steel trap for the beast, but when it was caught, it released itself by screwing off with its teeth the nuts confining the spring. He set a gun, but it cut the cord attached to the trigger, ate the bait, and broke the weapon.

The wolverine, like the magpie, is fond of stealing and hiding articles which are of no use to it. One day a hunter and his family quitted their lodge without leaving any one to look after it. When they came back, the house was absolutely empty; the walls were there, but nothing else. Blankets, guns, kettles, axes, cans, knives, and all the traps and implements used by the trapper had vanished. When the tracks round the house were examined, it was discovered that a wolverine had been paying a visit. The tracks of the animal were carefully followed, and in time almost the whole of the property was recovered.

Trapping and hunting of fur animals is usually carried on in the winter, as the fur is then in its finest condition, and, generally speaking, the colder the winter the better the fur; though, if the weather

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be too severe, and food be scarce, many animals die, and the others suffer such extreme hunger that their fur becomes very thin and poor. Paul Fountain, when almost a boy, spent the greater part of one summer with some Indian hunters. He often tried to induce one of them to go with him on a shooting excursion, but they nearly always refused, saying, "What good? No shoot now. No fox. No deer. No shoot till snow comes." And so they lay about, smoking and lounging the days away.

Trapping in the winter is no mere amusement. The cold is intense, food is scarce, houses are few and far between, and to lose the way, or be benighted in the snow-covered wastes, is almost certain death. There are three things that the man working alone should always possess, namely, an axe, a compass, and a box of matches. In the days before matches were invented flint and steel were used.

A story is told of a trapper who travelled into the woods when there was snow on the ground. He lost his way, and had no compass. Suddenly he came across the track of a man, which seemed to lead in the direction which he thought was the one he ought to take, so he struck into it, and followed on, thinking that before long he might overtake the lonely forester; but, after he had tramped for half-an-hour or more, he discovered, to his surprise, that another track had joined the former. There were evidently two travellers, both going in the same direction as himself. "Well," said he, after a moment's thought, "the more the merrier!" So he stepped out, and went along somewhat faster than at first. But presently he stood aghast at a third track which joined the trail. Fortunately he now thought of examining

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the tracks of his neighbours a little more carefully than he had yet done, when he discovered that they were all very much like his own. Having nothing to guide him, he had been walking round and round in a circle.

Most Boy Scouts know how easy it is to make a shelter with a few branches, provided you have an axe with which to cut them down ; and how easy it is to make a fire if you only have matches. Well, the first of the two following stories relates how a well-known writer, Mr. J. J. Rowan, made a shelter without an axe, while the second tells how a trapper in the woods of Maine was almost frozen to death because he had no means of getting a light.

Mr. Rowan went out alone, without axe or provisions, and got lost in the woods when the day was done. There were three feet of snow on the ground, and the temperature was forty degrees below freezing-point. He had no axe with which to cut down branches, but he was too old a hand to be bowled out by that. He took off one of his snow-shoes, and using it as a shovel, dug a hole in the snow about six feet square. In this hole he made a fire, for he had matches in his pocket, and there were plenty of pieces of dry wood round about. As soon as the fire blazed up and gave him light to see by, he searched for fir boughs, out of which he made a bed upon which to spend the night. He rose with the sun, and by ten in the morning was breakfasting in his own camp. One of his two Indian servants remarked when he saw him, "Suppose two nights man no come home, sartin he dead." You may spend one night without food in the pitiless northern winter weather, but you cannot live through two.

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Mr. Hutchins of Maine fared far worse than Mr. Rowan.¹ He was a great hunter, and by the time he was sixty-four he is said to have shot or trapped one hundred moose, one thousand deer, ten caribou, one hundred bears, fifty wolves, five hundred foxes, one hundred raccoons, twenty-five wild-cats, one hundred lynxes, one hundred and fifty otter, six hundred beavers, four hundred fishers, thousands of mink and marten, and tens of thousands of muskrats. It was on his second long trapping excursion that he was nearly frozen to death. He had gone into the woods with Captain John Churchill, another great trapper and hunter. When they had killed nine moose, they arranged that one of them should go home and tell all their friends and neighbours that they could have plenty of moose meat by going into the woods to fetch it. It was agreed that Hutchins should go on this errand, and so he started for home. They were then about thirty miles from the head-waters of the Dead River, where their home shanty was situated.

A "shanty" proper is an institution peculiar to the woods. The most common variety, which the woodsmen erect for themselves for temporary use, is made of the bark of the spruce fir, carefully peeled off so as to preserve the full width, and then spread out flat. A low framework of poles is then constructed, and the bark is arranged thereon so as to form a dwelling which is nearly impervious to rain. One side of the edifice, however, is always left open, and in front of this the fire is built, which serves to keep the occupants warm. The larger kind of shanty—the kind referred to in this story—is built of logs

¹ From *The Trapper's Guide*. Newhouse.

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fitted together at the ends like a log-house. The holes and cracks are filled up with clay or moss, and the roof covered with bark or split logs.

Well, it was arranged that Hutchins should follow the long line of traps, taking along with him what animals he found, to be skinned and stretched at the home shanty where he was to remain the first night. Now, when he reached the shanty, he found himself unfatigued, and, knowing that the daylight would last at least another two hours, he made up his mind to leave the animals for Churchill to skin, and to go on several miles further. It was fifteen miles down the Dead River to the house of a friend, named Folsom, and half-way was a place where the trappers had camped when they went into the woods. For this spot the lonely huntsman made, tramping along at a good pace, on the evening of a cold, sharp, biting February day. There was a strong, keen wind, and snow was falling heavily. Soon after dark, Hutchins arrived at the shanty. He carefully collected a pile of dry sticks for kindling, spread his blanket in the corner, and began to comfort himself with the thought of how cosy he would be in a few minutes. Having got everything ready, he went to his knapsack to get his flint and steel with which to light the fire, but they were missing. He searched every corner in vain, and at last concluded that he had left them behind in camp. By this time it was pitch-dark, and piercingly cold, and he hardly knew what to do. It was too late for him to think of returning to camp, and he knew that if he remained where he was, he would certainly freeze to death. So, after thinking it over, he decided to go on to the house of his friend Folsom. He thought that if he could get down to

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the river, the ice would be strong enough to hold him, and there the road would be straight, and the travelling easier.

He made his way through the forest till he came to the river, and went downstream until he got near some rapids where the water was open. Here he was obliged to leave the ice, and travel on land till he got past the falls. When he imagined that all danger was over, and that he had reached a point where the ice was once more strong enough to bear him, he grasped an alder bush, and slid down on to the frozen surface of the river. But it was not as strong as he had thought, and so, instead of landing on a solid roadway, he went plump through up to his neck in the water. By clinging to the alder bush he managed to prevent himself from going completely under, and, by dint of some manœuvring, he managed to disengage himself from his snow-shoes and knapsack, which he pushed away from him on the ice with his hatchet. Having got once more to land, he stumbled on in the dark, but, before he had gone half a mile, his clothes were frozen as hard as wood. Still keeping to the bank, he followed the stream for some distance to where the current was not so strong, and there determined to try the ice again. But luck was against him, and in he went just as he had done before. Once more, chilled to the bone, and weak with hunger and fatigue, he scrambled to the side, and plodded wearily and heavily along. The walking amongst the fallen trees and over the rough ground was so hard that, in despair, he turned to the ice yet a third time. He was too fatigued to be careful, and he slid down to the bank and got out on the river without any thought as to what might happen.



A DASH FOR SAFETY THROUGH FIRE

Ruxton, the traveller and naturalist, awoke one night to find his escape cut off by a bush fire. Twice he had to rush through the flames, which had been ignited by Indians, and once his horse fell back on him into a creek.

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Once more he sank, and was this time in a worse situation than before ; for he was so far from the shore that he could not pull himself out. He floundered about among the broken ice and water for some time, but finally managed to get rid of his luggage and heavy snow-shoes, and to reach the bank.

In spite of his three drenchings and his heavy frozen garments, he at last got to Folsom's. And there his courage nearly gave way, for there was not a soul in the place, and not a spark of fire ! In the condition he was then in, to have rested would have been certain death. The nearest house was another fifteen miles away, and belonged to a man named Reed. There was nothing for it but to try to reach this house ; for, should he fail, he must inevitably perish by the way. So he started off down the river for Reed's. It was eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and he was moving rather slowly, buoyed up, however, with that pluck and resolution which are part of the trapper's outfit. He struggled on till he could see Reed's house in the distance, perched high up on the top of a hill. When he got to the foot of the hill, he was so weak that he fell. He had not sufficient strength left in him to walk up the steep and slippery slope. Down he went on his hands and knees, and, inch by inch, he dragged himself painfully over the frozen snow to the door of the cottage. Reed came out, and was so startled by the haggard, death-like look on the face of the benighted trapper that he could scarcely speak. After a moment's hesitation, he dragged the frozen wretch into the warm shelter of the log-built home, made a roaring fire, thawed some of the cold out of his guest, and put him to bed under a pile of furs and blankets, where he slept without

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waking till noon the next day. When he got up, he felt as well as usual, though a little stiff after such a terrible journey.

It was thirty miles from the place whence he had first set out to the camp; fifteen miles from there to Folsom's, and fifteen miles from Folsom's to Reed's—in all, sixty miles. He had set out at eight o'clock in the morning, and reached Reed's at half-past three the next morning, having covered the whole sixty miles in nineteen hours and a half. Had he been frightened or disheartened he would have died. But if you want to be a trapper in the American woods, fear is the last thing you should carry about with you.

It is interesting to note that even the Indians sometimes lose their way in the pathless forests, though they will never admit the fact. They say, "Indian no lost! Indian here! Wigwam lost!"

CHAPTER II

IN THE BEAVER COUNTRY

THE beaver, once so abundant in the rivers and smaller streams of North America, is now comparatively scarce. Two centuries of relentless trapping have destroyed the animals by millions, and those that are left have been driven from their old haunts by the ever-increasing population. Within the last twenty-five years, their numbers have decreased to such an extent that, unless some measures are taken to prevent their destruction, this useful animal will soon be totally extinct, and there will be no more beaver for cuffs or muffs or trimmings.

At one time the beaver was found in all parts of North America, from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, but, more than half a century ago, it had gradually retreated so far west that the best trapping grounds were only to be found on the streams running through certain elevated mountain valleys.

The trappers of the Rocky Mountains belonged to a special class. They spent their lives in wild and lonely places among the mountains, with no teacher except Mother Nature herself, and their habits and characters became, under this stern discipline, a curious mixture of simplicity and ferocity. Their only wants were food and clothing, and these they generally managed to obtain by the aid of their trusty

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rifles, in the face of perils and hardships that turned them into men of stone and iron.

Not the least of their mountain foes was the grizzly bear, an animal that hunters, both white and red, consider the most heroic of game. If the trapper detected the presence of a grizzly in the district where he was at work, he would follow up the trail, sometimes approaching the animal so closely on horseback that when he fired, the flash of the rifle would singe the hair of the bear. But the man who played tricks like that needed a sure aim and an iron nerve, for the grizzly bear will receive almost any number of wounds without falling, unless hit in the head or the heart. Many are the stories of dangerous encounters between man and grizzly, but as we shall have plenty of stirring stories to tell in this book, we may choose here two of a somewhat humorous character.

Among the servants of one of the parties sent out by the Pacific Fur Company, was a man named William Cannon. He was such a bad shot, and had so little knowledge of hunting, that his companions used to amuse themselves from morning to night by unmercifully chaffing him on his deficiencies. He stood this for a long time, but at last he was so upset by the cruel chaff, that whenever a favourable opportunity presented itself, he would take his rifle and go alone into the woods. There he would practise diligently, but, alas! not very successfully. Well, one afternoon, when he had wandered out on to the plain, he shot a buffalo. He was overjoyed with his luck, but as he was a long way from camp, and could not possibly take the huge beast with him, he contented himself with cutting out the tongue, and a few choice bits from the body. He fastened these with a strap

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into a kind of parcel, and started on his return to camp full of glee, enjoying in anticipation his triumph over his jeering companions.

He was passing through a narrow ravine, when he heard an unusual noise behind him, and, turning round, beheld, to his horror, a grizzly bear following him. He had heard many horrible tales about the difficulty of shooting grizzlies, and he knew that he was, despite his luck that day, a very indifferent kind of shot ; so he dropped his bundle of buffalo meat as a present for the bear, and bolted. The bear, however, turned up his nose at the *dead* buffalo, and continued his pursuit of the *live* man. Cannon threw away his gun, his belt, and his knife, and climbed up the nearest tree. As the grizzly cannot climb trees, the bear had to content himself with establishing a blockade ; so he sat down at the foot of the tree, and kept his eye on Cannon.

Night came down, and the man up aloft got both hungry and sleepy. It was so dark that he was unable to see whether the bear had given him up as a bad job and gone off to supper elsewhere, or whether he was still on the watch. All through the hours of darkness, Cannon clung to the branches, picturing to himself his terrible fate, should he go to sleep for a single second and fall into the clutches of his foe below. He kept his dismal watch until the dawn, when, peering carefully down between the leaves, he discovered, to his intense relief, that the bear had gone. He scrambled down the tree, picked up his gun, and made his way as quickly as he could back to camp, without once thinking of his lost buffalo meat, the only proof he had of his having at last actually shot something. As we have already remarked, Cannon

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was an unskilful hunter, and a timid man. Most of the mountain men would have stood their ground and defied the bear to do his worst. Another servant of the Pacific Fur Company, John Day, of Kentucky, was of quite a different stamp. He was out hunting with one of the younger men of his party, a lively, excitable youngster, who had only just entered the service, and whom it was generally necessary to keep in check. While on their rounds, they met a huge grizzly who stepped out of a thicket about thirty yards away, reared himself up on his hind legs, and prepared for action. Up went the young man's rifle, ready to shoot. Day, with a quick decided action, laid his iron hand on the youngster's arm, crying, "Be quiet, boy! Be quiet!"

For a few moments they both remained perfectly still. The bear looked at them steadily, thought better of his proposed attack, dropped on all-fours, and turned slowly away. But when he had retired a few paces, he turned round, got up again on his hind legs, and showed his teeth as though he meant business. The young man had not budged from his first position, and was quite calm. Day, on the other hand, between his desire to teach the youth coolness in the presence of danger, and his desire to shoot the bear, was getting excited. Still gripping the youth's arm, however, he exclaimed, "Be quiet!"

The surprised bear once more dropped on all-fours and went off, but yet again he changed his mind and threatened to show fight, upon which Day could not restrain himself, but fired, saying, "I can stand this no longer."

As the bear dropped, the boy, who had been thus deprived of his first chance of bringing down a grizzly,

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turned angrily towards the older man, and reproached him for not practising the caution he had so earnestly recommended.

"Well, my boy," replied John Day, "caution is caution, but you can't put up with too much, not even from a bear. You don't suppose as I was going to allow myself to be bullied all day by a varmint of a bear like that."

The true Rocky Mountain trapper, as distinct from the mere servants of a company, was as expert as a beast of prey in tracking and capturing game, and he was so constantly exposed to perils of different kinds that he lost all fear of death, and all sense of the value of life.

One of the most daring and successful of the trappers who frequented the Rockies was Markhead, celebrated alike for his courage and his recklessness, and for the many almost miraculous escapes that he had effected when in the very hands of hostile Indians. He accompanied Sir W. Drummond Stewart in one of his expeditions across the mountains; and one night, when a half-breed had decamped with some of the horses, he heard Stewart say, angrily but thoughtlessly, "I would willingly give five hundred dollars for the scalp of that thief." Markhead made no reply, but quietly disappeared. The next day he rode into the camp with the scalp of the offender hanging from the end of his rifle. It is said that he then demanded and received the promised reward.

The only laws these trappers understood and followed were their own wishes. Of other laws, human or divine, they knew little and cared less. They were good friends, but bitter enemies, who never failed to seek revenge for their real or fancied wrongs, and

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careless both of life and property. Markhead, for instance, thought nothing of scalping a thief for a suitable reward; he had equally no objection to helping himself to other people's goods, at any rate, when he considered such thieving a legitimate form of warfare. He was trapping on the waters of the Yellow Stone, in the midst of the country inhabited by the Blackfeet Indians, the bitterest of all the enemies of the white trapper, when he suddenly came upon two or three huts from which the Indians were absent. He knew perfectly well, from signs that he had observed, that these men were lying in wait for him somewhere on the stream, that they might attack him when he was examining his traps. He chuckled to himself when he found the empty houses, never paused to ask how long the owners might be absent, or how far away they might be, but promptly went inside and helped himself to everything that took his fancy. The fire was burning brightly, and there was a meal cooking in the pot. He sat down, made a hearty dinner, eating all he could, and then threw the rest away. He next tied into a bundle all the blankets, furs, moccasins, and other valuable articles that he could find, mounted his horse, and rode off with the plunder.

Before a trapper started for a hunt, he obtained from the trading stations, or perhaps from a petty trader, quite a varied assortment of articles. He would take two or three horses or mules, one to ride, the others to carry his packs. He had also six traps which he carried in a leather bag or *trap-sack*. In a second sack he carried his ammunition, tobacco, and other necessities. He dressed in a queer fashion, in a shirt and trousers of skin, decorated with fringes

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and porcupine quills. Over his left shoulder and under his right arm hung his powder-horn and bullet-pouch ; the latter containing balls, flint, and steel. In his waist-belt was stuck a butcher's knife of good sound steel fixed in a sheath of buffalo hide. His outfit was completed by an ugly-looking tomahawk and a long, heavy rifle.

All preparations having been duly completed, the trapper would set off for the mountains, either alone or in the company of a few friends. On arrival at the hunting-grounds he carefully examined the creeks and streams for signs of beaver. If he discovered a newly-made track he put his trap in the run of the animal, hiding it under water, and attaching it by a stout chain to a tree or bush on the bank. A float was fastened to the trap, so that its position could be readily determined if the beaver carried it away. Traps were also set wherever the "lodges" of the beaver were found. Early in the morning the hunter mounted his mule and went round to examine the traps. The captured animals were killed, skinned, and dried, and then packed into bundles containing about ten to twenty skins. Sometimes, as he set his traps along the bed of the stream, he was tracked by Indians, who lay carefully in wait for a favourable opportunity, when they rarely failed to kill him with arrow or with spear.

One of the finest stories told about the feuds between the Indians and the white trappers in this part of the world has for its hero John Colter, who had accompanied the two explorers, Messrs. Lewis and Clarke, in one of their journeys. They arrived at the headwaters of the Missouri, when Colter observed signs indicating an abundance of beaver in that district.

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He asked for permission to remain and hunt there for some time, and his wish having been granted, he took into partnership another hunter of the name of Potts. They were in the district of the Blackfeet Indians, and as one member of this tribe had been killed by Lewis, they feared the enmity of their neighbours, and exercised great caution in following their occupation. They made it a habit to set their traps at night, take them up in the early morning, and remain concealed all day.

One morning they were examining their traps in a creek, which they were ascending by canoe, when they heard a noise resembling the tramping of animals; but they were unable to discover the cause of the sound, as the banks of the river at this point were very high, and shut out all view over the land. Colter declared that the noise was that of advancing Indians, and advised a hasty retreat; but he was only laughed at by Potts, who chaffed him for being a coward, and said that the noise was merely that made by a herd of buffaloes. Colter held his peace, and they continued their journey. A few minutes later, all doubt as to the meaning of the sound was removed by the appearance upon the river bank of a party of Indians five or six hundred strong, one of whom beckoned the two trappers to land. As retreat was now impossible, Colter turned the head of the canoe to the shore. The minute it touched the bank, one of the Indians seized the rifle belonging to Potts, but Colter, who was a remarkably strong man, immediately retook it, and gave it back to his companion, who was still sitting in the canoe. When Potts had once more got his precious rifle into his hands, he pushed off into the middle of the river. He had not

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gone many yards before he was shot by an arrow, and cried out in great pain, "Colter, I'm wounded!" Colter remonstrated with him on the folly of attempting to escape, and urged him to return. Instead of complying, he instantly levelled his rifle at one of the Indians, and shot him dead on the spot. In a second he was riddled with arrows, and his canoe drifted helplessly down the stream.

The Indians now seized Colter, stripped him stark naked, and began to discuss among themselves the method of putting him to death. Some suggested that he should be tied up to a tree and used as a mark at which to shoot, but the chief put an end to the discussion by seizing the prisoner by the shoulder and saying, "Can you run fast?"

Colter understood only too well what the chief meant; he knew that he had now to run for his life, like a hunted animal, and with the odds five hundred to one against him. But he preserved his presence of mind, and, with a certain amount of cunning, replied, "No; I am a very bad runner."

The chief now commanded the rest of the party to remain where they were, while he led Colter out on to the flat land to give him a fair start of three or four hundred yards. Then he released him, exclaiming, "Run! save yourself if you can!" Out burst the terrifying war-yell of the Blackfeet. Colter sprang forward, and, urged by the hope that perhaps he might save his life after all, he ran with the speed of the wind. His way lay over a plain six miles across, covered with prickly pear that pierced and tore his naked feet at every step. He had run nearly half-way across the plain when he ventured to look over his shoulder. He saw that his pursuers were very

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much scattered, and that he had gained ground on all but one, and that one, armed with a spear, was only a hundred yards behind. Fresh hope sprang up in the heart of the trapper, and gave fresh vigour to his wearied limbs. He made a desperate effort to draw ahead, but so great was his exertion that the blood gushed from his nostrils, drenching the front of his body. When he was within a mile of the river that crossed his path, he heard distinctly the appalling sound of footsteps close behind him. Every instant he expected to feel the sharp spear point in his flesh. Again he turned his head ; the savage was not twenty yards from him. Determined, if possible, to avoid the expected blow, he suddenly stopped, wheeled round, and threw out his arms. The Indian, surprised by this swift and unexpected action, and perhaps not a little by the appearance of the fugitive, who was covered with his own blood, also attempted to stop, but he was so exhausted with running, that he fell while endeavouring to throw his spear. The weapon stuck in the ground, and broke in his hand. Colter snatched up the pointed end, pinned his pursuer to the earth with it, and fled once more.

When the foremost of the pursuing Indians arrived at the spot, he stopped for his comrades to join him. Soon one long, hideous yell gave vent to their mingled passions of rage and shame. While they were busy examining the fallen man, Colter was flying for his life. Though almost exhausted, he kept valiantly on till he came to a wood, rushed through it, and plunged into the river on the other side. Just below the place where he dived was a small island, against one end of which a raft of drift timber had lodged. He dived under this raft, and, after several efforts,

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got his head above water between the trunks of two big trees. As the raft was covered over, to the depth of several feet, with smaller wood, he was able to hide himself. Scarcely had he discovered this uncomfortable hiding-place—body in the water, head under a timber heap—when his persecutors arrived at the brink of the river, screeching and yelling like a lot of fiends. Some of them came on the raft during the day, and Colter could see them through the chinks. When night came, and they had all departed, he dived from under the raft, and swam silently down the river for a considerable distance. As soon as he deemed it safe to land, he did so, and continued his journey all through the night.

Though he was able to congratulate himself on his escape from the Indians, his situation was still a very dreadful one. He was completely naked, and had no protection against the fierce heat that would come with the morrow's noon. The soles of his feet were torn and bleeding and full of the thorns of the prickly pear. He was hungry, without any means of killing game for food, and at least seven days' journey from the nearest post. Under these circumstances, most men would have given up in sheer despair; but Colter was an American trapper, so he lived on roots and berries, and plodded on for seven days, when he reached the abode of white men, who gave him food and shelter, and attended to all his wants.

The Indian does not always adopt the arrow, the gun, or the knife as a means of driving the white man from his hunting-grounds. Occasionally he has been known to set fire to the mountain or the plain, in order to destroy houses, animals, and men, all at the same time. The incident we are about to relate

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is told by Ruxton, the traveller and naturalist, and concerns an explorer, rather than the hunter and trapper with whom we are more especially concerned. But it is typical of similar deeds on the part of the Indians in their dealings with the trappers, and so may well be narrated here. Ruxton was camping in the beaver country, and had lain down by a rock on the mountain side, and had fallen fast asleep. "When I awoke," he says, "the sun had already set; but although darkness was fast gathering over the mountain, I was surprised to see a bright light flickering against its sides. A glance assured me that the mountain was on fire, and, starting up, I saw at once the danger of my position. The bottom of the hill had been fired about a mile from where I had secured my animals. A dense cloud of smoke was hanging over the gorge, and presently, a light air springing up from the east, a mass of flame shot up into the sky, and rolled fiercely up the stream; the belt of dry bush on its banks catching fire and burning like tinder. The mountain was already invaded by the devouring element, and two wings of flame spread out from the main stream, which, roaring along the bottom with the speed of a racehorse, licked the mountain side, extending its long line as it advanced. The dry pines and cedars hissed and cracked, as the flame, reaching them, ran up their trunks, and spread amongst their limbs; whilst the long waving grass underneath was a sea of fire. From the rapidity with which the fire advanced, I feared that it would already have reached my animals, and hurried at once to the spot as fast as I could run. The prairie itself was as yet untouched, but the surrounding ridges were clothed in fire, and the mules, with stretched

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ropes, were trembling with fear. Throwing the saddle on my horse, and the pack on the steadiest mule, I quickly mounted, leaving on the ground a pile of meat, which I had not time to carry with me. The fire had already gained the prairie, and its long, dry grass was soon a sheet of flame; but, worse than all, the gap through which I had to retreat was burning. Setting spurs to my horse's sides, I dashed him at the burning bush, and, though his mane and tail were singed in the attempt, he gallantly charged through it. Looking back, I saw the mules huddled together on the other side, and evidently fearing to pass the blazing barrier. As, however, to stop would have been fatal, I dashed on, but before I had proceeded twenty yards, my old hunting mule, singed and smoking, was at my side, and the others were close beside her.

“ On all sides I was surrounded by fire. The whole scenery was illuminated, the peaks and distant ridges being as plainly visible as at noonday. The bottom was a roaring mass of flame; but on the other side, the prairie being more bare of cedar bushes, the fire was less fierce, and presented the only way of escape. To reach it, however, the creek had to be crossed, and the bushes on the banks were burning fiercely, which rendered it no easy matter; moreover, the edges were coated with thick ice, which rendered it still more difficult. I succeeded in pushing my horse into the stream, but, in attempting to climb the opposite bank, a blaze of fire was puffed into his face, which caused him to rear on end, and, his hind feet flying away from him at the same moment on the ice, he fell backwards into the middle of the stream, and rolled over me in the deepest water. He

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rose on his legs and stood trembling with affright in the middle of the stream, whilst I dived and groped for my rifle, which had slipped from my hands, and of course sunk to the bottom. After a search of some minutes I found it, and, again mounting, made another attempt to cross a little further down, in which I succeeded, and, followed by the mules, dashed through the fire and got safely through the line of blazing bushes.

“I had, from the first, no doubt but that the fire was caused by the Indians, who had probably discovered my animals; but, thinking that a large party of hunters might be out, had taken advantage of a favourable wind to set fire to the bottom, hoping to secure the horse and mules in the confusion, without the risk of attacking the camp. Once or twice I felt sure that I saw dark figures running about, near where I had seen the Indian camp the previous day, and just as I had charged through the gap I heard a loud yell, which was answered by another at a little distance.”

Hunting beavers in the winter time was a most laborious occupation. A good hunter always left home in the early morning, and generally remained without food all day. To the usual summer perils of wild beasts and wilder Indians were now added the difficulties of getting the beavers amid the ice and snow, and the hardships of the terrible storms that occasionally devastated these regions. When the beavers were plentiful the task was a comparatively easy one. The beavers had numerous holes in the banks to which they retreated from the trapper; but, then, there were so many beavers that if one hole were empty, the next would almost certainly be occu-

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pied. But as the number of beavers decreased, while the number of hiding-places remained the same, the hunter had often to bore through the ice a great many times in order to secure one animal.

The beaver's lodge was usually first destroyed, and then the dogs, which were wonderfully sagacious, were sent to discover where the beavers had taken refuge. This the dogs would do with almost unfailing accuracy, no matter what was the thickness of the ice. They kept running up and down along the banks of the stream, with their noses to the ground, and the moment they discovered a retreat, they would jump about upon the ice, and bark in a very excited manner. The hunter would then come to the spot indicated, cut a hole in the ice, and poke about with a stick to find out whether the beaver had been frightened away or not. If it were still there, he thrust his bare arm into the hole, dragged the beaver out on to the ice, and killed it with a spear. The operation sounds dangerous, for the beaver has sharp teeth; but, curiously enough, the animal generally allowed itself to be seized without a struggle, though occasionally, when once out of the water, it would make a bid for life and freedom, and inflict severe wounds on its captor.

If the hunter found that there was no animal in the retreat, he barred up the entrance with sticks, cut another hole through the ice in another place indicated by the dogs, and again searched with his stick. This went on until the beaver was either taken or had found all his haunts closed. In the latter case, he was obliged to return to his house above the water in order to take breath, when he was either shot or trapped.

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As showing the character of the storms that made the winter existence of the trapper so hazardous, we may again quote Mr. Ruxton, who seems in his wanderings in the Rockies to have sampled most of the discomforts of the trapper's life. He says :—

“The black threatening clouds seemed gradually to descend until they kissed the earth, and already the distant mountains were hidden to their very bases. A hollow murmuring swept through the valley, but as yet not a branch was stirred by wind ; the huge cotton-woods, with their leafless limbs, loomed like a line of ghosts through the heavy gloom. Knowing but too well what was coming, I turned my animals towards the timber, which was about two miles distant. With pointed ears, and actually trembling with fright, they were as eager as myself to reach the shelter ; but, before we had proceeded a third of the distance, with a deafening roar the tempest broke upon us. The clouds opened and drove right in our faces a storm of freezing sleet, which froze upon us as it fell. The first squall of wind carried away my cap, and the enormous hailstones, beating on my unprotected head and face, almost stunned me. In an instant my hunting shirt was soaked, and as instantly frozen hard ; and my horse was a mass of icicles. Jumping off my mule—for to ride was impossible—I tore off the saddle blanket and covered my head. The animals, blinded with the sleet, and their eyes actually coated with ice, turned their heads from the storm, and, blown before it, made for the open prairie. All my exertions to drive them to the shelter of the timber were useless. It was impossible to face the hurricane, which now brought with it clouds of driving snow ; a perfect darkness soon set

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in. Still the animals kept on, and I determined not to leave them, following, or rather being blown, after them. My blanket, frozen stiff like a board, required all the strength of my numbed fingers to prevent it being blown away; and, although it was no protection against the intense cold, I knew it would in some degree shelter me at night from the snow. In half-an-hour the ground was covered on the bare prairie to the depth of two feet, and through this I floundered for a long time before the animals stopped. The prairie was as bare as a lake; but one little tuft of bushes presented itself, and here, turning from the storm, they suddenly stopped, and remained perfectly still. In vain I again attempted to turn them towards the direction of the woods; huddled together, they would not move an inch; and, exhausted myself, and seeing nothing before me but, as I thought, certain death, I sank down immediately behind them, and, covering my head with the blanket, crouched like a ball in the snow. I would have started myself for the woods, but it was pitchy dark, the wind drove clouds of frozen snow into my face, and the animals had so turned about in the prairie that it was impossible to know the direction to take; and although I had a compass with me, my hands were so frozen that I was perfectly unable, after repeated attempts, to unscrew the box and consult it. Even had I reached the timber, my situation would have been scarcely improved, for the trees were scattered wide about over a narrow space, and, consequently, afforded but little shelter; and even if I had succeeded in getting firewood—by no means an easy matter at any time, and still more difficult now that the ground was covered with three feet of snow—I

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was utterly unable to use my flint and steel to procure a light, since my fingers were like pieces of stone, and entirely without feeling.

“The way the wind roared that night—how the snow drove before it, covering me and the poor animals partly—and how long I lay there, feeling the very blood freezing in my veins, and my bones petrifying with the icy blasts which seemed to penetrate them—how for hours I remained with my head on my knees, and the snow pressing it down like a weight of lead, expecting every instant to drop into a sleep from which I knew it was impossible I should ever awake—how every now and then the mules would groan aloud and fall down upon the snow, and then again struggle on their legs—how all night long the piercing howl of the wolves was borne upon the wind, which never for an instant abated its violence—I would not attempt to describe. I have passed many nights alone in the wilderness, and in a solitary camp have listened to the roaring of the wind and the howling of wolves, and felt the rain or snow beating upon me, with perfect unconcern; but this night threw all my former experiences into the shade, and is marked with the blackest of stones in the memoranda of my journeyings.

“Once, late in the night, by keeping my hands buried in the breast of my hunting-shirt, I succeeded in restoring sufficient feeling into them to enable me to strike a light. Luckily, my pipe, which was made out of a huge piece of cotton-wood bark, and capable of containing at least twelve ordinary pipefuls, was filled with tobacco to the brim; and this I do believe kept me alive during the night, for I smoked and

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smoked until the pipe itself caught fire, and burned completely to the stem.

"I was just sinking into a dreary stupor, when the mules began to shake themselves, and sneeze and snort; which, hailing as a good sign, and that they were still alive, I attempted to lift my head and take a view of the weather. When with great difficulty I raised my head, all appeared as dark as pitch, and it did not at first occur to me that I was buried deep in snow; but when I thrust my arm above me, a hole was thus made, through which I saw the stars shining in the sky, and the clouds fast clearing away.

"Making a sudden attempt to straighten my almost petrified back and limbs, I rose, but, unable to stand, fell forward in the snow, frightening the animals, which immediately started away. When I gained my legs I found that day was just breaking, a long grey line of light appearing over the belt of timber on the creek, and the clouds gradually rising from the east, and allowing the stars to peep from patches of blue sky. Following the animals as soon as I gained the use of my limbs, and taking a last look at the perfect cave from which I had just risen, I found them in the timber. I jumped upon my horse, and, followed by the mules, galloped back to the camp, which I reached in the evening, half dead with hunger and cold."

At a certain time each year, when the season's hunt was over, the trappers loaded up their packs and made for the rendezvous previously arranged between themselves and the traders to whom the furs were sold. At these places they assembled with thousands of furs, but they never seemed to grow

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rich. In the first place, they were charged exorbitant prices for any goods they wished to purchase—sixteen shillings for a pint of gunpowder, thirty shillings for a pint of coffee. And, in the second place, they wasted their time and money drinking, gambling, brawling, and fighting. Day after day, as long as they had anything to stake, the games of chance went on. They would bet their horses, mules, rifles, shirts, and even their trousers. On one occasion a man actually staked and lost his own scalp. Naturally enough, there were many quarrels, and then came a settlement of all disputes with rifles at twenty paces, when one and sometimes both of the combatants were killed.

CHAPTER III

LEFT BEHIND

THE Greenland whale is hunted for its oil and whalebone. An average-sized whale will yield sixty to seventy barrels of oil, and about half a ton of whalebone. In former times whales were killed by harpoons thrown by hand, but this method has now, to a very large extent, been superseded, and the harpoons are fired from guns. Fast steamers, equipped with every appliance that human ingenuity can contrive, have taken the place of the old sailing vessels, and the possibilities of danger and accident have largely disappeared.

When the whale is wounded it dives, and remains under the water until want of fresh air forces it to come to the surface. When it reappears, another harpoon is aimed, and the whale dives again. This is repeated until the whale is dead, when it floats on the surface of the water. It is then towed to the factory; the blubber is cut up and boiled down into oil; the whalebone is removed and stored; the bones are ground up as a fertiliser for fields; what is left is then converted into another kind of manure, and as one writer humorously remarks, "The only thing that is wasted is the smell, and that is lavishly distributed."

Two hundred years ago, before science had shown

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what could be done with "refuse," only the oil and the whalebone were utilised, and the rest of the animal, bits of fat, skin, and bones, were left lying on the ice outside the sheds where the oil was boiled.

Many a man lost his life in the pursuit of the Greenland whale. Some had their boats capsized and were drowned; some starved to death because all their food had been consumed, and no more could be obtained; others were caught in dangerous storms and wrecked in the Polar Seas. More than once a party of men got left behind on the ice when the whalers returned home. Death was almost always their fate, but there is one case on record where a number of men spent nearly ten months in a deserted, frozen part of Greenland, suffering the greatest miseries ere they were relieved. Their adventures were afterwards related by Edward Pelham, one of those left behind, and it is from his own narrative that the story told in this chapter has been taken.

In 1630, one of the great trading companies, the Worshipful Company of Muscovy Merchants, sent three vessels from London to Greenland, to "make a voyage upon whales and sea-horse for the advantage of the merchants, and the good of the commonwealth." The vessels set sail on May 1, 1630, and arrived at Greenland some six weeks later; whereupon, having moored the ships and carried the empty oil-casks ashore, they began work fitting up the smaller boats with the things necessary for the prosecution of their labours. It was arranged by the captain, William Goodler, that the three vessels were to remain in the harbour where they had anchored, for another month. If by that time the crews had not been successful in their fishing, one of the ships was to be sent east-

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wards to a place where whales were known to resort at the end of the year. A second ship was to try its luck at a place some distance to the south, while the third, the one to which Pelham and his mates belonged, was to remain in harbour till August 20. The captain went off, and was so successful in taking whales that he needed assistance ; so he sent a small boat back to headquarters, with a command to the men to come to him at Green Harbour, and take on board some of the oil that had been obtained by boiling down the blubber. On the 8th August Pelham's vessel left Bell Sound, where it had been anchored, and made for Green Harbour. But, the wind being against them, they could not keep to their proper course, and were driven about for several days. When the weather finally became calm and clear, they found themselves off a part of the coast noted for its deer ; so eight of the men were sent on land, to obtain venison with which to provision the ships.

The men set out merrily enough, taking with them two dogs, an old-fashioned kind of gun, a tinder-box, and two lances, and, the weather being fair and clear at the time, they got ashore in four hours. They killed fourteen deer, and being thoroughly tired out, first with rowing and then with hunting, they set to work to eat the provisions they had brought with them, intending to remain on shore that night, hunt again on the morrow, and then return to the ship. But the next day was foggy, and a southerly wind sprang up which drove a great deal of ice in between the shore and the ship, so that the latter was forced to stand out to sea to avoid getting nipped in the ice, and the men lost sight of her altogether. As they were uncertain whether she were enclosed in the

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drift of ice or not, and as the weather grew more and more gloomy, they thought the best thing that they could do would be to follow the shore line, hunting as they went, to Green Harbour, where their captain was, and wait for their own vessel to come into port.

Coasting along the shore to Green Harbour, they killed eight more deer, and loaded up their boat with venison. When they reached the place for which they were bound, they were staggered to find that ships and men had all departed. They knew that the ships had not sufficient provisions to last the homeward voyage, so they concluded that the captain must have returned to Bell Sound, and would meet them there. But it was now the 17th of August, and, according to the arrangements previously made, they knew that, under any circumstances, the vessels would certainly leave Bell Sound on the 20th. They had, therefore, but three days in which to return ; it would be impossible for the captain to wait longer, as a little delay at that late season of the year might endanger the lives of all the other members of the expedition. In order to lighten the boat and speed their return, they heaved all the venison overboard into the sea. By night they had accomplished half the return journey, but the darkness came down accompanied by a dense fog, and it was impossible for them to go further. They were obliged to run ashore between the rocks, and to remain there till midday on the 18th, when the weather being a little clearer, though still thick, and only thirty-six hours being left to them, they started again on their hazardous voyage. They had no compass by which to steer, and not one of the men in the boat knew anything about the course ; so they groped their way

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like men in the dark, and actually passed Bell Sound, where their companions were anxiously waiting for them.

Some of the men in the boat felt that it was impossible for them to have been rowing and sailing so long without having passed the harbour, and a halt was called for consultation. Some wanted to go back; others wanted to go forward. One of them, William Fakely, who had been in the country five or six times before, insisted that they had passed the Sound and must needs go south again; but the majority of the rest, not one of whom had ever previously seen Greenland, trusted to their own reasons rather than Fakely's knowledge, and continued the journey northwards. When the weather cleared up a little, they were able to discern the tops of several lofty mountains. Fakely, looking about him, and recognising the neighbourhood, presently cried out, "We are all on the wrong course, as I told you before." Upon hearing this, the majority gave way, the head of the boat was turned round, and a southerly course was steered.

On the 20th August they were still without sight of the rendezvous. They were now utterly uncertain as to its locality, and a thousand sad imaginings tortured their anxious minds, for they knew assuredly that terrible miseries must unfailingly ensue if they did not find the ships and get taken home. After a time they arrived at a place which they recognised as being the spot where they had cast their venison overboard, and the remarks that were made as to Mr. William Fakely's knowledge of the country were so unpleasant that that gentleman lost his temper and refused to steer any longer. Pelham, the narrator of

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the story, then took the rudder out of Fakely's hand, and another attempt to reach Bell Sound was made. What with winds and ice, it was some time before they got anywhere near the neighbourhood of their first anchorage. About ten miles from the spot, they landed, and sent two men overland to see if the ships were still there. They returned later on in the same day, with the dismal news that their friends had departed. There was some slight possibility that the vessels might be at another anchorage, Bottle Cove, and the despairing mariners made as much haste as they could to reach that place, only to meet with another disappointment on their arrival.

There they stood, on the shore of Bottle Cove, amazed, looking pitifully at each other, the fear of the terrible future holding them still and silent. It was as though they had been converted into pillars of ice, and had been suddenly deprived of both sense and reason. The knowledge of their want of all necessary provisions for a winter sojourn in these regions struck an immediate terror into their hearts. They were unprovided with clothes to keep them warm, and food to prevent the cruel pangs of hunger, and they were destitute of shelter against the piercing cold. Yet as they stood there, silent and amazed, weighing within themselves the misery into which they had already fallen, and knowing that every minute of delay, in their desperate circumstances, was dangerous, they began to hope even in despair. Shaking off the numbing influence of their fears, they laid their heads together and took counsel as to the likeliest method of preserving their lives in that awful place, seeing that all hope of returning to England had now to be abandoned. By general consent of

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the whole company, they agreed to take the first opportunity of fine weather to return to Green Harbour, where they would be able to hunt and find venison for their winter provisions. When the favourable moment arrived, they lost no time, but hoisted sail, and, within twelve hours, were on their old hunting-ground. The first thing they did after landing was to make a tent with the boat's sail which they spread out upon the oars. It was not much of a resting-place in a climate like that of Greenland, but there they resolved to remain that night, and to refresh themselves with such food as they had.

Next day they went out hunting, leaving behind Fakely and one other, John Davies, to keep house and do a little cooking so that there should be something hot to eat when they came home. On the side of a hill near the coast they spied a herd of deer feeding. With the help of the dogs they killed six of these, and later on they were able to secure six more. At the spot where they had set up their rude tent they found another boat that had been left behind by the ship's company, and piles of refuse that had been thrown away after boiling down the blubber of the whales in the manufacture of oil. The men divided into two companies, loaded the two boats with the venison and the remnants of boiled whale, and made for Bell Sound as being the most suitable place in which to pass the winter. There it would be possible to store what provisions they had already obtained, and with the next fair wind they could return to Green Harbour for fresh supplies of venison.

In the neighbourhood of Bottle Cove they were overtaken by storms which forced them to land. They tied the boats fast to each other, threw the

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anchor overboard, and left the boats riding in the Cove. They had not been ashore more than a few minutes, when a violent blast struck the mouth of the Cove, loosened the anchor, and dashed the boats against the shore, upsetting them and sinking the whole of the provisions. The men rushed down into the boiling surf, and managed to drag the boats out of the reach of the waves. Some of the venison and whale-fat was thrown ashore, and this, though wet and half-spoiled, they hastened to secure.

In the course of a few days they got back to Bell Sound, where their first business was to take what provisions they had, and store them in the wooden shed that had previously been used by the coopers in the service of the company, as a workshop, for the making or repairing of the casks used in carrying the whale oil. The building was fairly substantial, eighty feet long and forty feet wide, and covered with tiles.

The weather now became so tempestuous, the frost so keen, and the days so short, that another hunting excursion to Green Harbour was out of the question, and all attention was concentrated on providing comfortable quarters for the winter. The "house" at the disposal of the sailors was so large that they decided to build another and more convenient one inside it. There was, near at hand, another wooden structure, that had been used by the blubber-boilers. From this they got a hundred and fifty deal boards, besides posts and rafters. From the three chimneys of the furnaces they brought a thousand bricks. They also found three hogsheads of fine lime, which they mixed with sand from the seashore, by which means they got excellent mortar; but the weather was so

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cold that they had to make two fires to prevent the mortar from freezing.

Pelham and Fakely undertook the building part of the work, and began to raise a wall, one brick thick, against the inner planks of one side of the shed. While they were laying the bricks, the rest of the company were otherwise employed, some carrying and cleaning bricks, some hewing boards for the other side of the house, and two salting and preparing venison. Two sides of the house were built of bricks and mortar, but as these used up all the bricks, the remaining sides were built of boards. Thick posts were set up, and boards were nailed on both sides of the posts, leaving a hollow space about a foot wide between. This space was filled up with sand, so that not the least breath of cold wind could penetrate. When finished, the residence was twenty-five feet long, sixteen feet broad, and ten feet high. The ceiling was made of deal boards piled one on top of the other, and so arranged that they, like the walls, would keep out the winter cold. The chimney was a mere hole opening out into the larger shed. The door was constructed to shut as closely as possible, and lined with an old bed that was found in the place, and which was large enough to cover all the cracks. No windows were made, and the only light obtainable was got by taking a few tiles off the outside shed and letting the light come in through the hole that did duty as a chimney.

The next business was to build four cabins, each to hold two men. The beds were of the dried skins of the deer, and proved exceedingly warm and comfortable. Finally, it was necessary to procure a stock of wood for the fires. All the boats that had been

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left ashore were examined, and seven of them, which were found to be so crazy that they would be of no use during the next season, were broken and carried inside. In addition to this, a further supply of fuel was obtained by smashing up all the empty casks that could be found, as well as a number of wooden utensils used by the oil-makers. Certain things, however, that would be absolutely necessary for the next year's work, were put on one side, the men determining not to touch these unless forced to do so.

Every night, before going to bed, they raked together all the ashes and embers, and put into the middle of them a thick piece of elm, which slowly smouldered all through the night, and served as a means of making a brighter fire in the morning. In this way they kept a fire going for about eight months.

Early one morning towards the middle of September, as two of the men were looking intently at some drift-ice that had entered the Sound, they saw two walruses asleep upon a piece of ice. They took an old harpoon iron that was lying in the shed, fastened a rope to it, and launched the boat with the intention of rowing towards the animals. When the men got near, Pelham saw that the beasts were fast asleep, and told the rowers to hold their oars still for fear of waking them. His orders were promptly obeyed, and the boat drifted along until it just touched one of the animals. At that moment, Fakely, who had been holding the harpoon in readiness, struck the elder of the two creatures such a blow that she was stunned, after which the thrusts of five or six lances completed her destruction. The younger walrus, loth to leave her mother, continued swimming so long

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about the boat that she, too, was killed with the spears. The two animals were hauled ashore, flayed, and cut in pieces, to be roasted and eaten. A week later another walrus was captured, but the cold weather increased so quickly that the only chance of getting more food was to look out for a stray bear. When the men took stock of their provisions, they found that, if they were to remain alive till the return of the ships at the next whaling season, they would have to curb their appetites pretty severely. They therefore limited themselves to one big meal a day, and made Wednesdays and Fridays fast-days, except for bits of refuse whale-fat that they had collected on the ice. For three months this was their diet.

By the exercise of much courage and ingenuity, the men had, as we have seen, provided themselves with a house, firing, and food ; but their clothes and shoes were now so worn and ragged that they were obliged to invent some device for either mending them or getting new ones. So they made thread out of rope yarn, and needles out of whalebone, and with the help of the skins of the deer and the walruses they repaired their damaged wardrobes.

By the 10th October the whole sea was frozen over, and as there was now no more work to do, the men had time to lie and think, and therefore to worry about the future, and to complain about the present. What with dreaming of weeping wives and children, and of parents sorrowing for their sons, they began to lose all their pluck and to despair of ever living through the long winter months. And to add to their misery, their venison and firing were running low, so that, even with the greatest care, it did not seem likely that their stores would hold out until more could be

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obtained. For fear, therefore, that fuel might fail, they roasted half a deer every day, and stowed the meat in casks, keeping, however, as they thought, enough fresh meat to allow them to have a hot roast joint on Sundays and on Christmas Day. But one day they discovered that all the whale-fat that had got wet at Bottle Cove had gone mouldy, and was loathsome. Under these circumstances there was only meat enough for five meals a week, and for the next three months they feasted three days a week on venison, and fasted four on mouldy whale-fat.

For four months the sun remained below the horizon, causing one long, unbroken night. All this dreary time, they kept a kind of reckoning of the days and the weeks, so that when the ships came back again, they found that they knew exactly the day of the month. The continual darkness proving very irksome, they sought for some means of obtaining a light. They found a piece of sheet lead from which they made three small lamps; they used rope yarn for wick, and they got oil from a barrel that had been forgotten. In this way they managed to brighten up a little the dark interior of their abode.

So things went on until the New Year, when the days began to lengthen again; but the cold was so intense that if they touched iron at any time, it would stick to their fingers like bird-lime, and raise blisters in their flesh as though they had been burned with fire. If a man went outside for anything, the cold would pinch his body in such a way that he was as sore as if he had been cruelly beaten. During the first days of the winter they had been able to get water from a spring that lay under the ice close to the shore, but by the middle of January the ice was

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so thick that they were unable to pierce it with their axes, and they had to put up with water made by melting snow with hot irons.

One day the ration-master gave notice that the provisions had run so low that they would not last above another six weeks ; but before the end of that time arrived, the sun had returned, and it was possible to go outside and look for food. To their unspeakable joy, they discovered two bears, a mother and her cub, making straight towards their front door. They armed themselves with their lances, and went outside to await her coming. The bear cast her greedy eyes upon the men, for she was as hungry as they, and, full of hope of a hearty meal, she came along at a great speed. But they assailed her so valiantly and fiercely with their spears that she fell upon the ground, rolling over and over, and biting the very snow in her anger. The cub escaped, but the mother formed a welcome addition to the rapidly emptying larder. They drew the dead bear inside, skinned her, cut her in pieces, ate fourteen pounds of her flesh that day, and existed on bear's flesh for nearly another three weeks. This fresh meat was more palatable than the stale venison, and when it was all finished they began to look out eagerly for a new supply. In the course of the next few weeks they saw over forty bears, and they managed to kill seven, one of which was over six feet long. They roasted them on wooden spits, and pronounced their new diet better than the best beef they had ever tasted. There was now no necessity to starve themselves any longer, and they frequently ate two or three meals a day, so that their strength increased, and they became a little more cheerful.

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Several kinds of birds that had left these regions in the depth of winter now began to return to their summer quarters, and following them came the foxes, which, during the cold months, had been hiding in their burrows under the rocks. For these foxes the sailors set snares like rat-traps, and baited them with some of the birds they were able to catch. By this means more than fifty foxes were captured. One of the two dogs disappeared, and no one ever knew what became of him ; and the other one got so fat and lazy, that when the weather became warm enough for deer-hunting, he could not catch them.

Towards the end of May, the men took it in turn to go to the top of a high hill to see if they could discover any open water in the sea. Day after day the journey was made in vain, till a violent storm broke up the ice and carried it out to sea, clearing the Sound to within a distance of three miles from the shore. On May 25 there was a cold easterly wind that prevented any one from going out, and while they sat huddled round the fire with the door tightly closed, two ships from Hull arrived in the Sound. The crews of these vessels had been told that a number of men had been left behind the previous year, and they had been ordered to go ashore at any likely places and see if they could find any traces of the poor wretches. Of course, they never expected to find anybody alive, and they were not a little astonished when, on landing, they found a small boat ready fitted with tackle and provisions, which had been prepared for an expedition in search of walruses. They could scarcely believe their eyes ! They were looking for heaps of bones, not for living men. They walked up to the old shed, the men

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inside being totally ignorant of the fact that relief was at hand. When they were at the shed door they called out in a loud voice, "Is there anybody here?"

The men inside were so much startled and afraid that, at first, they were unable to speak. Then, suddenly realising what had happened, they rushed out into the open air, all black and dirty from the smoky atmosphere in which they had been living, and with their clothes in rags. They looked such a pack of crazy, disreputable rascals, that the men who had come in search of them jumped back in amazement; but a few seconds served to convince them that these were the whalers that had been left behind a year before. There was a good deal of handshaking and laughter, and then, with a mixture of amusement and pride, the Hull sailors were taken into the shed, and entertained with venison roasted four months previously, and a cup of cold water, "which, for novelty's sake, they kindly accepted of us."

"Then we fell to ask them what news," says Pelham, "and of the state of land at home, and when the London fleet would come, to all which they returned us the best answers they could. Agreeing then to leave the shed with them, we went to their boat, and so aboard the ship, where we were welcomed after the heartiest and kindest English manner; and there we stayed ourselves until the coming of the London fleet, which we much longed for, hoping by them to hear from our friends in England. We were told that they would be there next day, but it was full three weeks ere they came, which seemed to us as tedious a three weeks as any we had yet endured, so much we desired to hear from our friends, wives, and children."

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In due time the fleet arrived, the men grew well and strong again, served during the summer in the whale fishery, and got back home again at the end of the year, having spent nearly ten months, in peril of their lives, in the ice-bound wastes of Greenland.

CHAPTER IV

THE INDIAN TRAPPER

THE North American Indians belong to many different tribes, speaking different languages, having different customs, and, in fact, being so unlike in character that to deal with them separately and fully would require many books. But whatever the appearance or the customs of the various tribes, they are all mostly dependent on the hunting of wild animals in order to supply their daily needs, and to obtain the means of purchasing the tobacco, beads, and looking-glasses, of which they are so fond, as well as the guns and ammunition which have rendered their existence so much easier than it was when they had only bows and arrows.

These Indians have been described by some travellers as noble, generous creatures, in many respects superior to the white man with whom they have come in contact; and they have been exhibited by others as cruel, rapacious savages, inferior to the animals they hunt. The different pictures belong to different tribes, and are coloured, whether for good or ill, by the spectacles of the explorer and the trader. One characteristic, however, seems to be common to all of them, and that is heroic fortitude under the most trying circumstances. Without this pluck and endurance they could never have existed at all. Here

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is the story of a blind Indian, told by Butler,¹ which illustrates what we mean.

The Indian belonged to the tribe of the Crees, and accompanied some other members of the clan on a hunting journey across the plains. He followed the party by attending to the sounds made by them on the march, varying his distance from the main body at his pleasure, but never getting out of hearing. On one occasion, however, being a little more lazy, or a little dreamier than usual, he lagged quite a distance behind, and as the party crossed over a ridge and disappeared on the other side, all sound of their movements ceased. As soon as he realised that his ears, like his eyes, were no longer of any use to him, he became alarmed, and, in great fear, began to run swiftly forwards in the hope of reaching his friends. But, being without any means of directing his course, he took a wrong direction, and found himself alone and helpless on the wide and lonely prairie. When he was thoroughly tired out, he sat down to consider his situation. The idea of ever rejoining those he had lost was one now not worth thinking about. But there were forts and trading posts where white men dwelt, and if he could but reach one of these he would be safe. Travel to the east, west, or south meant death in the uninhabited, thirsty grass-lands; to the north, only, lay food and shelter. North, then, he must needs travel. He was without provisions, but his own and other tribes had recently been out after buffalo, and he could hope, with little chance of being disappointed, that he would sooner or later stumble against the carcass of some lately-killed buffalo. There were also small ponds or lakes at

¹ *The Great Lone Land.*

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intervals, and on the finding of these he depended for water to quench his thirst.

Blind and alone, he kept due north for three days, steering his course by the warmth of the sun's rays on his naked body. In the early morning the eastern rays were on his right shoulder, at noon they were scorching his back, and towards evening they worked round to his left side. When the sun set he stopped, and lay down for the night in the dew-soaked grass. Sometimes soft mud under his feet warned him of the presence of a pond or lake. Then he would go gently forward, drink of the cooling water, and, having refreshed himself, pass round the lake till he could once more steer a northerly course. Water he found frequently, but it was two days before he stumbled over the bones of a buffalo. Eagerly, greedily, his thin, hot hands travelled over the frame of the fallen beast. On rib and leg scarce a trace of flesh was left; the wolves had devoured it all; but on the gigantic head the skin was as yet unbroken, and into this he plunged his long sharp knife, cutting and stabbing with a haste that only the fear of death from hunger could produce, and carving out great slices of raw meat. He satisfied his appetite, took what was left for future use, and, with renewed hope and strength, turned his face to the north.

Three days later—that is, at the end of his fifth day's journey—he was still out in the wilds. The remnants of the buffalo's head had long since been consumed, and for hours he had found no water. The day had been intensely hot, and he stumbled rather than walked, with but little strength in his body, and less hope in his heart. The sun was setting, and he was despairing of ever living through the

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night to feel the cheering rays again, when his feet suddenly sank into some soft mud. Reeds and rushes brushed against his legs, and he knew that water was close at hand. At the edge of the lake he knelt down and drank a long, long draught. Here he determined to lie down and die. To perish of hunger is terrible, but to perish by thirst is to suffer inexpressible torment. Here, at any rate, he had water in abundance.

Now, not many miles away, there was another party of hunters, also Crees, seeking, as was usual at that time of the year, for buffalo meat and hides. It was within an hour of sunset, and the leader of the party directed his followers to go to a certain spot and make camp, with the intention of spending the night there. While they were about this business, he would ascend a neighbouring hill and take a look over the plains, to see if he could discover the trace of a herd. They started, he to climb the hill, the others to camp in the appointed place. When the chief reached the summit of the hill, he was unable to see any buffalo, which displeased him very much, and, to his surprise, he found his men were disobeying his orders, and that displeased him a great deal more. They were camping in an entirely different spot from the one which he had pointed out. He hurried to rejoin the band and to vent his wrath on those who had disobeyed; but they explained that, though the spot they had chosen was not a very good one, yet they had lost the track to the place he had selected, and seeing water here, had thought it better to camp there for the night rather than go further and perhaps fare worse.

While they were arguing and quarrelling, a figure rose up from among the reeds on the opposite side of

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the lake, and shouted. Fear, for a moment, fell upon every heart; for the Indians are very superstitious, and some thought it was a spectre they saw; others thought that it might be one of the Blackfeet, with whom they were then at deadly enmity. But it did not take long for them to discover that what they were looking at was merely a blind, lame, haggard wretch—one of their own people. It was the lost Cree, who had long before heard them drawing near his resting-place among the reeds, but had not ventured to show himself until their speech told him that they were not of the hated Blackfeet. Had they been his enemies, he would have died where he was, just as he had intended, alone and famished, by the lake side, rather than have allowed them to take his scalp and put him to a shameful death.

The Indian trapper, like his white brother, sets about the business of taking marten and foxes at a time when the winter cold is intense and the days are just beginning to lengthen. He sets his traps in a long line, often stretching ten to fifteen miles, and visits them once a week, in order to remove what has been caught, and reset the trap with fresh bait. The traps generally used are made of wood, and are so constructed that when the animal takes the bait, he causes a heavy log of wood to fall upon his back. In the spring, the beavers, in particular, are often shot rather than trapped, as they then leave their winter houses. Butler tells an interesting story¹ of an Indian who was in want of gunpowder and bullets with which to go beaver-shooting. He tramped a long distance to a station named Hudson's Hope, carrying with him thirty marten skins that he had

¹ *The Great Lone Land.*

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taken in the winter, and which he wished to exchange for ammunition and tobacco. When he got to the Hope there was nobody there. The man in charge had gone elsewhere on business ; the house was deserted, and the store closed. The Indian was sorely puzzled what to do. He knew that inside the store there was enough gunpowder and tobacco to last all his tribe for a lifetime. The windows of the store were covered with parchment, and in one pane there was a big hole. The Indian fixed his eye to this, and took a good survey of the interior. There were piles of red flannel shirts, four flint guns, bundles of red cotton handkerchiefs, tea, tobacco, and shot, to the value of many hundreds of skins—and there was nobody there but himself and a companion !

He withdrew and reflected on the situation, but that did not improve matters very much. He was in want, and the things he needed were at hand. Why not go in through the parchment window and help himself to whatever he wanted ? For two days he withstood the temptation, and then, feeling that his moral courage was growing weaker, he turned away from the place and left it. But the thought of the beavers that could be shot if only he had the powder, and the knowledge that there was plenty of powder at the Hope, gradually turned him round again, and in another day or so he was back at the store.

He effected an entrance into the room, took from the cask of powder three skins' worth, from the tobacco four skins' worth, and from the shot also four skins' worth. He stuck the right number of skins for payment on the powder-barrel, the shot-bag, and the tobacco-case, and finally hung up the other nineteen skins on a nail to be placed to the



A PERILOUS METHOD OF SHOOTING A FALL

A canoe's crew attempted to wade down to the top of the fall and there to cross a narrow point, thus saving a long carry. Unfortunately the rock bottom above the fall was slippery, and they and the canoe were shot over.

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credit of his account, and departed, feeling very unhappy in his own mind as to what he had done. Some white trappers would have been less scrupulous.

During the winter and early spring the trapper stores his furs, but when the ice begins to melt, and the snow to soften, he sets off to carry his goods to one of the posts, or forts, or stations, as they are variously called, to sell them to the traders. He may travel either by land or by water, but by whichever route he journeys, he has often great difficulties to face. Many of the streams are beset with falls and dangerous rapids, and in such places it is necessary to land and carry both canoe and furs to the next stretch of navigable water. This is called making a *portage*. Mr. M'Clean, of the Hudson's Bay Company's service, relates an experience of his own that shows how perilous such a canoe journey may become, especially in the absence of proper precautions. He and his party were approaching a fall, where at first no traces of a portage could be discovered. The men unloaded all the canoes, and began to carry the goods through the woods; but the men who rowed and steered the boat determined on wading down with the canoes, the water being shallow, until they should come to the fall, where, by lifting them across a narrow point, they could place them in the smooth water beneath. The attempt was made, accordingly, by the leading canoe; but the rock over which the current flowed being smooth, and covered with a shiny moss, the men slipped, and in an instant were precipitated over the fall. When the men on land saw the canoe rushing over the brink, with the poor boatmen clinging to it, they made certain that all their lives would be lost. They ran down to the foot of the fall, which

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was about eleven feet high, having previously ordered a canoe to be carried across the point. When they arrived there they were astonished to find that the canoe had not been upset after all. The men had managed to get into it, and it passed so near to the shore that M'Clean extended his arm to lay hold of the bow. But before he could seize it, the stern had come within the influence of a whirlpool, and the canoe was hurried out into the middle of the stream, and dashed with such violence against a rock, that the crashing of the timber could be distinctly heard from the shore. This shock, which might easily have proved fatal, fortunately had the effect of throwing the canoe into an eddy, or counter-current, which whirled it to the opposite shore. Here assistance was at hand and the men were rescued, just as the canoe was sinking under them.

The land journeys from trapping ground to trading post are often a hundred miles long, and five or six families frequently make the journey, in company, for mutual help and protection. The women and the dogs draw the sledges, and carry the babies and goods; and the men stalk majestically on in front. Lonely trappers on these journeys are subject to dangers that do not so often affect the larger groups.

An Indian trapper, named Pierre, was going along his line of traps, when he met another Indian with a sledge hauled by two dogs. He remarked that the load on the sledge appeared to be a heavy one; but as the new-comer did not reply, and looked very sad, Pierre asked him to come into his hut, and pass the evening there. The invitation was accepted, fresh caribou meat was brought in from the sledge, and the two men managed to prepare and eat a very good

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supper. After the meal was finished, and the air was thick with tobacco smoke, the Indian began to talk a little about the furs that he was taking to the post. When it grew dusk, he turned to Pierre, and asked in a mournful voice if he might bring the sledge inside, as there was a dead body on it, and he was afraid the dogs would devour it if he left it outside. Pierre consenting, the body was brought in, and laid in the coldest part of the shanty, where there was a little snow that had blown in through a crack. Silence reigned for a long time, but at last Pierre's curiosity could no longer be restrained, and he asked :

“ Did you bring that body far ? ”

In answer the Indian explained that he had come a long journey from the interior, that the dead man was his cousin, and that he was taking him to be buried at the post. He told how they had set out together, when they came upon the track of a “ cat,” that is, a lynx. They followed the tracks, hoping to add the skin to those they were taking to market. The cousin, who was in front, suggested that he should go up the mountain at the foot of which they were then standing, while his companion should take the dogs, and go down the valley. In this way they hoped to corner their prey. In accordance with the suggestion, the two men separated. An hour later, the man in the valley heard a gun fired. He sat down, and waited a long time for his cousin to return ; but no one came. Night was fast falling, so he thought he would go and search for him ; but he could find nothing. When it became quite dark, he fired his gun several times as a signal, but he received no reply. He came to the conclusion that some accident must have happened, and determined to remain where

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he was until daylight, when he would be able to follow up the tracks of the lost hunter. He pulled down a few branches of the spruce-fir, made a bed in the snow, drew some more branches over himself as a covering, and slept soundly until the dawn. As soon as it was sufficiently light he followed the tracks made by his cousin in the snow, and about half-way round the side of the mountain he found him, almost dead, but just able to speak. Close by his side was the lynx, frozen stiff. The hunter had fallen into a crevice in the rock, immediately after firing and wounding the beast, and when he was within twenty yards of it. One of his legs was broken in the fall, and as soon as he fell, the lynx sprang upon him and tore off part of his scalp. He managed to kill his foe with a hunting-knife, but could not get out of the crevice on account of his broken leg, and he could not reach his gun to reply to the signals that he had heard in the valley.

The Indian lifted his cousin out of the snow, but his fingers snapped off—they were frozen. “Water, water!” murmured the dying man. A fire was quickly made, and water procured by melting snow in a blanket held over the flame. The frozen hunter recovered a little, and made his cousin promise to take him to the post, and bury him there; and though the spot was miles away, and the journey difficult and dangerous, the faithful savage was bravely keeping his promise.

The lynx, which is hunted for its fur, constitutes one of the possible dangers to be encountered by those who traverse the woods alone. It is a kind of cat, though much larger than the domestic animal with which we are so familiar. It is found not only in the

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northern parts of North America, but also in Europe and Asia ; though the one sought for commercial purposes comes chiefly from the neighbourhood of York Fort, in British North America. In winter the fur becomes long and thick, and loses the bright colour that it possesses in the warmer weather. The fur was formerly dyed dark brown, and used in the making of busbies for officers in the English hussar regiments. The lynx has been called the “dandy” of the woods, on account of its fondness for perfumes. The odour of castoreum, a secretion of the beaver, is its chief delight, and trappers frequently smear their traps with this perfume in order to capture the animal.

A white trapper, Mr. Peter Mackenzie, had a lucky escape from a lynx on an island in the middle of a lake opposite a trading station. The story is related by Mr. Hind in his *Explorations in Labrador*. He says : “ It was in the spring of the year, shortly after the ice had parted, that Mr. Mackenzie went across the bay in his canoe, more for exercise than for any special object. He took no gun with him—nothing but a bow and arrow, a knife and snow-shoes. Landing on the island opposite Mingan, he saw the fresh tracks of a lynx. He adjusted the snow-shoes, soon found the animal, and followed it closely several times round the island, without coming within shot. At sunset he returned to the post, but at dawn on the following morning he resumed the chase in snow-shoes. Round and round the island he pursued the cat, always at a steady pace ; towards evening he saw that it was getting very fatigued, for he got two opportunities of striking it with the heavy arrow which is used for killing small game. At last he came

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within twenty yards ; the cat turned round, rose on its hind legs, snarled, and began to paw the air. Mr. Mackenzie discharged another arrow, but at the same moment his snow-shoes tripped him up, and he fell headlong with his face in the snow. The cat instantly sprang upon him, tearing with one stroke the coat from his back. Mackenzie turned round at once, and caught the cat by the throat with one hand, and with the other he drew his knife ; but as he made a lunge, they both rolled over together, and he received some very nasty scratches. Still holding on firmly to the throat of the animal, he was not bitten, although he was in danger of having the lower part of his body torn to pieces by the hind feet of the cat, who was making a vigorous resistance. A second lunge with the knife was fatal ; it passed through the animal's heart, but it left Mackenzie exhausted and bleeding on the snow. He soon recovered, however, and carried his booty in triumph to the post."

But to get back to our Indian trappers and their journeys. Butler¹ relates the story of a blind Cree who arrived one day at a trading station almost dead from starvation. The man had set out five days before from a distant camp with no companion but his wife. They loaded their dog with the furs which they wished to dispose of, and departed on their march, the woman in front, her blind husband next, and the dog in the rear. On approaching a plain where a herd of buffaloes were grazing, the dog got excited, left the trail, and gave chase to the buffaloes, carrying the furs with him. The woman told her husband to remain where he was, and on no account to leave the spot till she returned. Having given

¹ *The Great Lone Land.*

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these instructions, she went off after the dog ; but she was so long away that the blind man began to get uneasy, and as there was a biting wind sweeping over the snow and chilling him to the bone, he made up his mind to go on. He fancied that his wife had got lost, and that there might be more chance of his meeting her if he went on, than of her finding him if he remained in that place.

He went along, hour after hour, calling as he went ; but no answering voice replied to his. Although the setting of the sun meant nothing to him as far as his sight was concerned, he could tell that night had fallen by the increased coldness of the air. Like the other blind hunter, whose story has been told in this chapter, he found himself, after a time, upon the edge of a lake, only, in this instance, the waters were locked in the grip of the ice. Being now too tired to go further, he cut a quantity of long, dry grass with his knife, made a bed on the edge of the lake, and lay down to sleep.

While all this had been happening, the woman had first given chase to the dog, and having caught him, had returned to the spot where she had left her husband, only to find that he had departed. At first she was able to follow him by his tracks in the snow ; but after a while the wind arose, and blew the light, powdery snow about on the plain, so that the tracks were soon covered up and lost. The woman, nothing daunted, kept on in the same general direction, and at last arrived on the edge of the same lake by the side of which her husband lay asleep, but at some distance from the spot where he was resting on his grassy bed. She was now too tired to go any further, so she made a fire in a little wood, and went to sleep.

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In the middle of the night the man awoke, half-frozen, and not knowing the hour, set off again on his journey, leaving his wife, unknown to him, asleep within reach of his voice. A fearful snowstorm now set in, which lasted for three days, during which time the Indian plodded on across the plain without a particle of food, and with nothing but snow with which to quench his thirst. At the end of the third day he reached a wood where there was some dry timber. By means of his axe he got a supply of it, and made a fire, and, having thawed a little of the cold out of his joints, he put his gun down by the side of the fire, and went off to gather more fuel; but, as ill-luck would have it, he was unable to find his way back, and so lost both his fire and his gun. He made another fire, but lost that in the same way, and then pluckily set to work a third time; but, in order not to lose *this* fire, he tied a rope to a tree hard by, and held this in his hand while he gathered more wood. Then, as if to try him to the utmost, the line broke, and he had to grope about in the thicket once more. In the end, however, he discovered his first fire, with his gun and blanket close beside it.

He had now so little strength left that it seemed almost impossible to proceed, and he was about to resign himself to his fate, when he heard a crow calling, and, in his superstitious way, took this as the voice of the Great Spirit directing him in the right path. He followed the call, and after another day's tramping he reached the fort, having been five days without a bit of food of any kind.

When they arrived at the trading posts, the Indians bartered their cargoes for various articles. In the old days they brought such quantities of beaver skins

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that they ought to have made their fortunes. In one year alone, the Hudson's Bay Company received from Indian trappers fifty thousand beaver skins, and nine thousand skins of marten. But the Indians were so improvident, that even before they left the stations they had wasted most of what they had earned. All the bartering was done by reckoning beaver skins as the standard ; so many martens, so many foxes, &c., were equal to one beaver. The trader, on receiving the skins, reckoned up their value according to a fixed tariff, and gave the hunter one quill for each beaver value ; these quills were afterwards exchanged at the counters of the Company's stores for whatever articles the Indian fancied. Two fish-hooks, or one pound of shot, cost one beaver skin ; one axe, or one pound of gunpowder, could be bought for four ; while a pistol cost ten, a blanket twelve, and a gun twenty-five. The Indians are now usually paid in cash. The traders supplied the hunters with whatever they wanted, and by the time they returned to their hunting-grounds they were generally heavily in debt. Recovering payment was sometimes attended with a certain amount of danger.

Mr. Fisher, a servant of the Hudson Bay Company, advanced a sum of money to an Indian, expecting to be paid at the end of the next hunting season. But when spring came, the man took his furs to one of the petty traders who established themselves in various spots, and who were troublesome rivals of the Company. In this way he got money and credit from a new source, and avoided paying his old debts. Mr. Fisher heard of this, and, seeing the Indian pass his door, called him in and asked for the money that was due. All he got was an insolent and threatening

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reply, which so exasperated him that he lost his temper, and kicked the offender out of the house, in the presence of several other Indians. A year later the Indian sent to ask Mr. Fisher to pay him a visit to his hut. The trader accepted, thinking he had been summoned for the purpose of receiving his money. But the moment he entered the house he discovered that he had fallen into a trap. There stood the Indian, with painted face, holding a pistol in his hand. He presented this as if to fire, but hesitated for a moment, to enjoy the look of fear that he expected to see upon the face of the Englishman. In this he was disappointed; for Fisher, realising the position of affairs, and thoroughly understanding the nature of the Indian, immediately bared his breast, stared his enemy fiercely in the face, and cried: "Fire, you dirty dog! Did you think you had sent for some old woman?"

This undaunted attitude so staggered the resolution of the savage, that he dropped his hand and dashed the pistol to the ground.

It sometimes happened that the Indian trapper did not conduct his bartering in the orthodox business fashion. An old explorer, Monsieur Perrin du Lac, tells of how he fell in with a trapper who took a violent fancy to a pair of silver ear-rings worn by a sailor, one of the members of the expedition. The young savage offered in exchange for the ear-rings furs of more than twenty times their value; but, for some reason or other, the owner refused to part with them. The next day the Indian waylaid the man with the ear-rings, shot him in the neck with an arrow, and left him for dead. He stripped off the ornaments, and then came with an air of great satis-

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faction to Monsieur du Lac, and presented him with the skins which he had previously offered for the trinkets which he was now wearing suspended from his ears. The Frenchman no sooner understood what had happened, than he hastened to the spot, and found the sailor motionless, and almost dead, with the arrow still sticking in his neck. Another Indian extracted the weapon from the wound, and laid upon it a leaf which he prepared by first chewing it. Du Lac found, on his return to his camp, that the whole of his men were under arms, preparing to revenge themselves on the supposed murderer. But he assured them that the wounded man would recover, and, after a time, he quieted them down, so preventing further bloodshed.

CHAPTER V

AFTER SEALS IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

SEALS for our purposes may be divided into two classes, namely, hair seals that are hunted for their hair and oil, and fur seals from whose skins sealskin overcoats and jackets are made. In this chapter we are concerned with hair seals only. They are as valuable to the Esquimaux as the bison was to the Indians of the prairies. The flesh is not bad eating, though too oily for a white man's taste. The skin makes warm and durable breeches and boots, and the oil can be burned in the lamps. Hence the Esquimaux will risk a great deal to obtain a supply of these creatures. About March the hair seals bring forth their young, usually on the drifting ice-floes. As soon as the natives observe any seals lying down upon the fields of ice which winds or tides have carried near the shore, they at once launch their canoes if the sea is not too rough, and try to get within reach of the animals without frightening them. It sometimes happens that they get so excited in the pursuit that they forget their distance from land, and, if a wind springs up, they may be blown away without hope of return.

In the winter of 1859 four men and two squaws went off in pursuit of some seals which they could see on an ice-floe about two miles away. Everything

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was in their favour, for there was every indication of fine weather and no wind. So the men paddled away gleefully for the nearest floe. This they crossed, dragging their canoe after them; after which they paddled to the next one, dragged the canoe over that, and so on, till they got near to the one on which the herd of seals was basking in the sun. They managed to kill several seals, but, on looking round, one of them discovered, to his horror, that the ice-floe had quietly separated into two parts, and that there was a lane of water, twenty feet wide, between them and their canoes. Without a moment's hesitation, he took a short run, sprang into the air, and succeeded in leaping across the opening. One of his companions followed his example, but missed his footing, and fell into the water, at the same time stunning himself by dashing his head against the low wall of ice. He sank before his friend could lay hold of his clothes, and was never seen again.

The man who had succeeded in leaping the gap took the canoes round to the floe, where they loaded up their cargo of seals, and then returned sadly and silently to their homes with the mournful news of the loss of their comrade.

The captain of a small sailing schooner told Mr. Hind a story, which he reproduces in his *Explorations in Labrador*, concerning the fate of several native seal-hunters on an ice-floe near Anticosti, the island off the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

"I reached Anticosti," said the captain, "about the 20th of March. There were several large fields of ice between us and the north shore, and seals in plenty. We got on the ice and killed a score or more, and were just sailing away to another field, when one

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of the men called my attention to a floe about a mile from us, on which a black object was visible. They took it for a bear, but with my glass I saw it was motionless, and too large for any animal in these waters. I put the helm down, and bore towards it; we could make nothing out of the black mass, which, half covered in snow, lay still on the ice, about a couple of hundred yards from the edge. I went with three men towards it, and found two Indians and two squaws huddled together on the lee side of a small mount of ice they had collected together to shelter them from the wind. They were frozen fast—all stone dead. No doubt they had been blown off the shore, and drifted about here and there on this stormy gulf until they lost hope, and, Indian fashion, huddled together, they looked death in the face, and met him, sure enough, surrounded by his worst terrors, starvation and cold.”

The old-fashioned methods of taking seals, popular in the days of sailing vessels, were clumsy and cruel, and attended with many dangers. The modern methods are less cruel to the seals, but the dangers to the men are not much diminished, for they are connected with the conditions under which sealing must at all times be prosecuted. As the modern steamer with its scientific equipment and elaborate apparatus is a very prosaic affair, we turn to the days of our forefathers for something of more interest.

The old sealing vessel undertook to carry a certain number of men, and was fitted out, provisioned, and provided with everything necessary, either by her owner, or by the merchant hiring her. The men applied for berths on board the boat, and every one who was selected had to pay about four pounds for

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the privilege of sailing in her. For this they were supplied with provisions during the voyage, and on the return, half the profits of the voyage were divided among them.

Captain Furneaux, of the *Topaz*, took with him, on one of these seal-hunting excursions, thirty-six men and nine four-oared boats. Every man was provided with a gaff, made by firmly fastening a spiked hook, like a boat-hook, with a strong line to the head of a stout pole, about six or eight feet long, and a hauling rope—several yards of strong cord with a noose at one end. The first morning after leaving Newfoundland was dark and foggy. At seven o'clock, after tacking about an open lake in the ice, and finding no channel, they dashed into the ice with all sails set, in company with two other vessels. The ice soon got firmer, thicker, and heavier, and ere long they were stuck fast.

“Overboard with you! gaffs and pokers!” sang out the captain; and over went the greater part of the crew on to the ice. The gaffs we have already described: the pokers were poles twelve to fifteen feet long. By pounding with the gaffs and pokers, and hewing with axes, the men managed to split the ice near the bows of the vessel, and to make some kind of an opening. Then great iron claws were laid on the ice some distance away, and the vessel warped a little farther on her passage. Sometimes the ice-saw was used, and sometimes a crowd of men would hold on to a number of ropes suspended from the vessel's side, and dance and jump about on the ice till they broke it by their own weight, when they pushed the loose pieces below the vessel and dragged her over them with all their strength. They were

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usually up to their knees in water, but as one piece after another was pushed out of the way, they still clung to their ropes, and stuck to the work, cheering loudly at every yard gained, dancing, jumping, pushing, hauling, hewing, sawing, till every soul on board was in a state of the greatest excitement. In this way they traversed some fifteen miles on the first day.

The further north they went, the heavier became the ice, and in many places great blocks of it were tilted up and piled one on top of the other. Whenever the ice opened a little, they crowded on all sail until they crashed into another great sheet of frozen water, splitting it with the force of the impact, but staggering back as the result of their attack. The vessel rolled as if in an open, storm-tossed ocean, and the noise of the broken ice smashing against the sides of the ship was like the roar of machinery. In due time they arrived at the sealing ground, and the men set to work.

Such good fortune did not always befall those who tempted Providence in this bold fashion. In the year 1707 an incident occurred, which was related by one of the survivors, Alan Geare, and subsequently published. According to his account, the vessel on which he was sailing saw shattered ice ahead, and endeavoured, by changing her course, to avoid it. About eight or nine at night they fell into a mass of ice that was being driven into them by a strong current. They saw that it would be hopeless to try to escape ; so they hung out cables, ropes, hooks, and other thick articles over the side of the boat, in order to break the force of the impact. But about eleven o'clock the ship received a tremendous blow, which drove a hole clean through the side. Two pumps

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were got to work, and the men bailed and pumped incessantly all through the night, and with such energy that the water had made but little headway when the morning dawned.

As the sun rose higher and higher, the men grew more and more fatigued, so that the amount of water increased rapidly, and by noon the hold was half-full. Every man was at his wits' end what to do, for they were unable to repair the rent in the vessel's side. They continued pumping with gradually diminishing strength, but they all made up their minds to die patiently and quietly as brave men should.

In the midst of their despair some one thought of the boat, and it was suggested to the captain that she should be launched and sent adrift with as many men as she could conveniently carry. The captain replied that it was folly to think of reaching land in such seas and weather with a small boat, and that, as for himself, he had resolved to perish at his post. Nevertheless, as one after another of his officers continued to worry him, he ordered the boat out, and put William Saunders and five other men into her. In order that the rest of the crew should not suspect what was happening, it was given out that the boat was going ahead to try to tow the ship clear of the ice. This excuse was ridiculous, for there was only one oar, the rest having been broken in trying to keep the ship safe from blows. Yet the design was unsuspected, and the boat went ahead.

The towing idea was soon abandoned, especially as it had never seriously been entertained, and the men fell astern, intending to take in the captain and as many more as could be conveniently carried. A certain number of necessaries for the apparently almost

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hopeless voyage, a compass, and some other things, were lowered into the boat, and the men waited only for the captain in order to cast off. Several of the officers were preparing to descend, and Geare himself was scrambling down a rope, when the men on board discovered and realised what was going on. They seized the guns and pistols, and kept off the boat, threatening to shoot if it should approach; for, said they, "As that cockle-shell cannot save us all, we'll all perish together."

The six men in the boat were not allowed to return, and Geare and another sailor, William Langmead, dropped into the water from the ropes by which they were descending when the plot to steal away was discovered, and swam after the boat, where they were taken in.

There were now eight men in the boat, all anxious, if possible, to save their captain. To that end they hovered about the ship for many hours, being fired at several times, till, night approaching, they began to seek shelter, and accordingly went amongst the shattered ice, and made fast their boat to a small hillock. When their connection with this was broken by the impact of other and larger masses, they moved away, and made fast to another block, and so on all night.

In the morning, looking abroad, they saw their ship about three leagues away to the east, still in the same position as that in which they had left her; whereupon they held a consultation to decide whether or not they should return and make another attempt to save the captain. But they were all so much afraid of being shot, or of being run down by the vessel, that it was at last resolved to leave her to her fate, and do their utmost to get to land.

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But Geare's conscience troubled him not a little, and he foresaw what men would say of them should they save their own lives in this manner and leave their captain to die. At first he tried to persuade his companions that, as the ship was still afloat, the leak must have been stopped, and they might as well go back and rejoin her; but they scoffed at his arguments. When he saw he could not prevail in this way, he asked them to row him back and set him upon that part of the ice which was next the ship, and he would walk back to her and die with his comrades. This they unanimously agreed to do, and, accordingly, they rowed him to the ice; but when they got there his pluck failed him, and he was loth to get out.

They were seen by several men on the ship, and the captain, the doctor, and another officer came over the ice to them, without at first being perceived by the rest of the crew. The alarm was soon given, and a race for the boat across the tumbled ice took place. She was pushed off in great haste, having now twenty-one men either in her or hanging on to the sides. Some were taken in, others were forced to drown, and of the rest, part perished on the ice, not being able to return to the ship, and part went down with the vessel a short time later.

The only provisions in the boat were a small barrel of flour and a five-gallon cask of brandy. They had also an old chest, one or two handspikes, and a hatchet. They split up the chest, and nailed some of the pieces to the handspikes to furnish them with oars, the nails being obtained by drawing them out of sundry places in the boat. The remainder of the chest was reserved for fuel. Out of an old tarpaulin

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and a piece of canvas they constructed two sails, and thus rigged out and provisioned, they got clear of the ice, and made in the direction of the shore. Shortly afterwards they fell in with another mass of loose ice, and in attempting to sail through it, they became surrounded by many great islands that gradually drew more closely together. They were forced to haul the boat up on the ice, or else it would inevitably have been crushed to pieces. On that ice they lay for eleven days without sight of any other vessel, or any indication of the nearness of the land. The ice was thick enough for them to walk upon, and as there were a number of seals about, they caught a few and killed them. They skinned them, spread the skin over the ice, put lumps of seal fat on the skin, set fire to it, and, by means of the curious fire thus created, cooked the leaner parts of the seals.

They lay so long in this cold region, that the men began to complain of their feet, and as the boat was too little to afford much room to such a crowd, there was a great deal of shouting and grumbling, as first one frost-bitten limb and then another was trodden on. To afford more room in the boat, the men divided into parties of six, each of which took it in turn to go on to the ice and keep watch. Frequently the ice would break under the boat, and then it had to be launched, and another convenient spot, strong enough to bear it, discovered.

At the end of eleven days some open water was seen, and with great difficulty the boat was launched and sailed to the north-west for about ten to twelve leagues; but before the distressed sealers had gone very far, they were again enclosed by the ice. This happened four or five times, the last lot of ice proving

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much worse than the first, because there was so much of it that the boat could not be forced through it, and yet it was not solid enough to bear the weight of the men. Hence, though many seals were seen on the surrounding ice-pack, none could be caught. Fortunately there were seven seals in the boat when she parted from the hard ice, and a dead one was found near at hand a little later, "which went down without questioning how he died."

The party was now put on short rations—one seal for two days. This, with about three ounces of flour, mixed with water, and boiled over the fat of the seal, formed a meagre and miserable diet. The men shared the fat and skin amongst them, each one putting by a certain amount of the fat with which to make the fire. They were so hard put to it, that eventually they ate everything raw, not being able to afford fat for fires. Naturally enough, in these circumstances, some died; but the grief of the remainder was lessened by the fact that there was more seal meat per man left for distribution.

When they were once clear of the islands of ice, and quite out in the open water, they began to have hopes of soon reaching some part of the land. But occasionally the wind was so contrary or so strong that they could neither row nor sail; when they would bear away to a huge mass of ice, cut a nook in it with a hatchet, make the boat fast to it, and there lie till better weather. Though they obtained shelter in this way, yet they were often in great danger, as other great blocks of ice would drive against the boat, constantly endangering their lives.

They quenched their thirst with the ice, and with a small allowance of frozen brandy which they dug

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out of the cask with a nail. As the daily allowance of food grew scarcer, the men died at the rate of two or three a day, till there were only nine left. When a man died, his clothes were stripped off him to help to keep the survivors warm, and in nearly every case the dead man's toes were so frost-bitten that they came off in his stockings. The last to die was the boatswain, who lived till the day before they saw land. That last day was a time of great distress, for on it they lost their water-bucket and compass, and were compelled to direct their course by the sun and the stars.

After twenty-eight days of such terrible experiences, nine survivors reached the shore, where they found three men preparing for a fishing voyage. The fishermen took the weary, hungry sailors to their hut and gave them rum, bread, dry peas, and dry beds. When they landed at Belle Isle, some days later, they were so disfigured with hunger and cold and seal oil that they looked like monsters rather than men, and children who saw them fled in terror.

The usual method of working among the sealers, once they had found the herd, was to go overboard, and make for the young seals which were lying scattered about, basking in the sun, and sheltered from the wind by the rough blocks and piles of ice. The men would then kill the seals with a blow of the gaff, skin them with a broad clasp-knife, fasten the skins together in bundles of six, and drag the bundles over the ice by means of a hauling rope. As the men came on board they occasionally snatched a hasty moment to drink a bowl of tea, or eat a piece of biscuit and butter ; and as the sweat was dripping from their faces, and their hands and bodies were

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reeking with blood and fat, and as they often spread the butter with their thumbs, and wiped their faces with the backs of their hands, their eating was of a pronouncedly "messy" description. The deck, where it could be seen, was almost as slippery with blood and fat as if it had been of smooth ice.

When the pelts had lain open on deck for a few hours in order to get cool, they were stowed away in the hold, being laid one over the other in pairs, each pair having the hair outwards. The hold was divided by stout partitions into several compartments, to prevent too much motion among the seal-skins and keep them in their proper places. As the skins were stowed away, the ballast was heaved out, and the cargo was relied upon for balancing the vessel.

Through forgetting to divide the hold into separate compartments a captain once lost his ship. He was detained on his return from a profitable excursion among the seals, by strong contrary gales. He had on board some five thousand skins, and the continual motion and friction caused the fat that was attached to many of the skins to run to oil. This loosened the whole mass, and as the bulky cargo then dashed about from one side of the hold to the other with every roll of the vessel, the captain was obliged to run before the wind, which was blowing violently from the north-east.

The oil spread from the hold into the cabin and the fore-castle, swamping everything, and forcing the crew to remain on deck. They got up some bags of bread, and, by putting down a pump through the oil into the water-casks, they managed to get fresh water.

After being in this state for several days, the cap-

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tain and crew were taken out of the vessel by a ship that they luckily fell in with, and were carried to St. John's, New Brunswick ; but the vessel and her valuable cargo, and almost all the personal belongings of the captain and the crew, were necessarily abandoned to the mercy of the winds and the waves, and what became of them was never known.

At times, when the men were at work on the ice, fog would come down and envelop the whole district in darkness. Jukes tells us of such an occurrence, that took place when he accompanied a party of sealers many years ago. He says : " In the afternoon the fog thickened while some of our men were out after seals ; the captain and I accordingly amused ourselves with firing a nine-pound carronade that was in the bows of the vessel once or twice every half-hour as a signal. Before dark two men came alongside, looking for eight men missing from their vessel, and shortly afterwards two more from another vessel, who had lost their way in the fog. Gradually all our crew found their way back, and the four strangers slept on board of us. Throughout the night we could hear the guns and signals of various kinds from different vessels around us whose men were missing. Beating the outside of the bulwarks with a rope makes a noise that is heard a long way ; clapping two boards together, or striking a frying-pan with a poker, is also a good signal, the sound being more distinct, and the quarter it proceeds from more easily distinguished than the heavy boom of a gun through the fog.

" Thick fog is one of the principal causes of danger in a sealing voyage, men having often been lost through being drifted out to sea on the ice, separated,

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perhaps, from their vessels, by channels suddenly forming, or wandering quite away in the fog and perishing miserably of cold and hunger on the surface of the frozen sea."

All the sealing vessels that have been wrecked have not been lost purely as the result of ice and tempest. Many have been deliberately sunk by their owners. Before setting out, the ship and her future cargo were heavily insured, and at some convenient place and season the vessel was sunk, probably long before any seals had been taken. The ship having been scuttled, and the crew saved by means of their boats, a claim was made on the Insurance Company for the value of the vessel, and for the thousands of seals that would have formed her cargo had they been caught. In a recent book on Labrador¹—*Where the Fishers Go*—the author, Mr. P. W. Browne, relates an incident which was told to him by an insurance agent in Newfoundland.

Some years ago, a man effected a heavy insurance on his craft and cargo with the intention of scuttling the vessel. He arranged the division of the spoils with his crew, and off a certain point in the coast, caused two huge holes to be bored in the bottom of his ship; but, by mischance, the auger was left in one of the holes. The captain and crew abandoned the sinking vessel, and put ashore at a rendezvous used by vessels returning from the fisheries. There they told the pitiful story of their unfortunate loss, lodged a claim for the insurance money, and received the customary hospitality from the local magistrate.

Eventually they were sent to their homes, every one sympathising with them in their distress. But the

¹ Published by T. Werner Laurie, Clifford's Inn. 3s. 6d.

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vessel did not sink after all ; she was blown ashore by a strong nor'-wester, and when she was examined the auger was found in the hole where it had been left by the captain. This enterprising gentleman, not knowing what had happened, went in due course to St. John's, and there, at the insurance office, recited his tale of woe. When he had finished, one of the clerks opened a drawer, produced the auger, and asked the shipwrecked mariner if he had ever seen the implement before. There was no answer to the question, and the fraudulent skipper left the city with all the speed he could, glad to lose the insurance money, if he could only save his own miserable skin.

CHAPTER VI

AMONG SIBERIAN BEARS

IN the previous chapters of this book we have been dealing with the animals of the north of North America. We now turn our attention for a while mainly to the animals of the north of Asia. The climate of most parts of Siberia is one of great extremes, the temperature being that of Egypt in the summer, and that of the Poles in the winter. Not many kinds of animals are able to exist under these conditions ; of those which are fitted to withstand the rigours of the climate, some are useful as food, others are valuable for their skins, and a few have other uses to which we shall presently refer. The hunting of these animals has, of course, been practised from time immemorial, for only from them could the native tribes obtain food and clothing. But in comparatively recent times, the value of the furs to the white men of northern Europe has led to a more extended and persistent pursuit of this form of wealth.

There are as many different native tribes in Siberia as there are tribes of Red Indians in North America, and no attempt can here be made to distinguish between them. If, however, we select, as typical of the rest, one of these, the Tongoose tribe, which lives in the mountainous region between Lake Baikal and the Sea of Okhotsk, we can show in a few words the

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value of skins to them for domestic purposes, apart from any question of their value as a means of barter.

A Tongoose wears trousers made of reindeer skin, with the hair inside, and stockings and boots provided by the same animal. His waistcoat and jacket are also made of leather, lined with the skins of the white fox or the hare. He has a warm fur cap, large fur-lined gloves, and a "comforter" for his throat made of the tails of squirrel. The skin of the fox is used for caps and linings, but the warmest, and therefore the most valuable skin to the Tongoose, is that of the wolf. The beds are made of a bear's skin, or of that of the large reindeer; the blankets are from the same animals, are lined with the warmest fur, and, in shape, are like a bag, the feet being completely enclosed.

We shall first devote our attention to the bears, whose skins are of great commercial value. The Russian, or brown bear, is used for coachmen's capes, ladies' muffs, sleigh-robcs, and rugs. The caps of the Grenadiers in the British Army, and the collars of coats in Russia, are made from the skin of the black bear which is found in Canada and Alaska.

In a very old book on America we are told: "There are many black bears—fearful of human kind; but if hunted, they run directly on those that pursue them; they sleep all the winter, lying six weeks on one side, and six on the other, and sucking their feet all the time."

We have some doubts as to the accuracy of the information conveyed in the above paragraph, and we find it equally difficult to reconcile all the accounts that are given by travellers concerning the bears of Siberia. Some travellers were evidently afraid of the

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bear, and described him as fierce and powerful in the highest degree ; others were braver than the bear, and called him a coward. Readers of this book can take their choice between these opinions, so diametrically opposed.

Atkinson, a great authority on Siberia, tells a story of two children, one six years old, and the other only four, who rambled away into the woods while their parents were busy hay-making. They went gaily from one bush to another, gathering fruit, laughing and thoroughly enjoying themselves. At last they found a bear that was lying on the grass, and, without the slightest trace of fear, went up to him. He looked at them steadily, but did not move ; after a few minutes they began to play with him, and got on his back as though he were a kind of big dog. To all their little pranks he made not the slightest objection. The children were delighted with their new play-fellow, and he seemed equally to enjoy their merry company. After a time, the parents missed their little ones, became frightened, and followed on their track. They were not long in finding them, when they were utterly dismayed to see one of the youngsters sitting on the bear's back, and the other one feeding him with fruit. They called to the children, who ran quickly to them ; but the bear, apparently not caring so much for the parents as for the children, shuffled off, and hid himself sulkily in the forest.

A very well-known bear-hunter in Siberia was a woman, Anna Petrovna, the daughter and sister of famous hunters. In early life she displayed a very unlady-like love of shooting wild animals, and was taught how to use a rifle, with which she destroyed many wolves and other animals. But she was never

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allowed to go out after bears. Now, every time that bear-skins were brought home by any of the members of her family, she grew more and more anxious to add one of her own procuring to her spoils, and at last made up her mind, without a word to any one, to seize the first favourable opportunity to try her luck. She had so often heard her father and brothers discussing their exploits that she felt she knew exactly how to proceed.

One day a large black bear was seen by one of her brothers when wandering through the forest in search of game, with a rifle of small power. As the men sat round the fire at night a plan was arranged for the capture of the creature. The next morning, long before any one else was out of bed, Anna put on her hunting garments, saddled a horse, slung her rifle over her shoulder, and quietly rode away. As she was in the habit of going out where and when she pleased, her absence caused no comment; and long before the day dawned, she was many miles from the cottage. Early in the morning she reached the forest, tied her horse loosely to a tree, so that he might feed while she was away, and then penetrated the thick and tangled wood before her.

There had been a heavy fall of dew, and she could see from the fresh tracks on the damp grass that Bruin was taking his morning ramble. She examined her rifle, added some powder from her flask, and went along with a firm and fearless step. The bear had been pursuing a very zigzag course, but she followed his trail with the sagacity of a bloodhound, and never once lost it. As it threatened to be a long time before the beast would be cornered, she sat down by a small stream, and made a frugal breakfast of dry

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bread and fresh water. When she had finished her meal, she shouldered her rifle, and again pushed on. She had another long walk, but still she could not find the bear. Satisfied, however, that she was on the right track, she kept on till she came to a tangle of high plants among which was the giant fennel, whose flowers the bear regards as a great delicacy. By certain marks upon the ground she knew that her long-sought victim was close at hand. She crept cautiously forward, and then, with a loud growl, the bear rushed out of the thicket, only twenty yards in front of her. She dropped on one knee, raised her rifle, and took careful aim, the animal all the while merely staring at her and remaining motionless. She pulled the trigger; there was a flash from the powder, a savage growl from the bear, a struggle on his part for a minute or two, and her wish was accomplished—the bear was dead!

Having taken off the skin, she went in search of her horse, which she found not very far away, for she had been brought back almost to the spot from which she had commenced the chase. She was soon on her way home, where she astonished the family by flinging on the floor, as she entered the cottage, the trophy that crowned her exploit. That was her first, but by no means her last bear.

A stick does not seem exactly the kind of weapon one would choose with which to attack an animal possessing all the strength and ferocity that some writers attribute to the bear, but Atkinson vouches for the truth of the following adventure of a hunter in the Altai Mountains.

The man was quietly strolling about one afternoon, quite alone, and without arms of any kind, when he

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emerged from the forest into an open glade, dotted here and there with single trees. Almost immediately, on entering this spot, he saw a she-bear with her two cubs about two hundred feet away. The moment she noticed the man, she gave vent to a savage growl, drove her young ones into the lower branches of the tree for shelter, and mounted guard at the foot of it, in order to protect them.

The hunter went back into the wood to get a weapon, as he had determined to carry off the cubs. Some woodmen had been cutting timber, and out of a number of stems of young birches that were lying on the ground, he chose a pretty strong one about four feet long. Thus armed, he went back to the glade. As soon as the old bear saw him return, she began to growl furiously, and to move uneasily to and fro in front of the tree. He advanced slowly and steadily, till when he was within about one hundred feet, the growl grew more savage, and the bear took up a position which showed that she meant mischief. Still the hunter went steadily forward, his keen eye fixed on the bear, as he trod easily over the smooth, grassy plain. When he was within about fifty feet, she made a savage rush; but the man did not budge, and stolidly waited for her to approach.

At this moment the cubs began to whine, and the mother trotted back to the tree in great fury, followed by the intrepid hunter. When he was within twenty feet of her, she turned round savagely, eyed him intently for a moment, then rushed at him a second time, her eyes glaring like balls of fire. When within easy reach, she rose on her hind legs, intending to clasp him, and crush him in her savage embrace; but he swung his club over his head, and dealt her

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such a blow that she toppled over. She got up again in a second, only to be once more laid prostrate by a well-aimed stroke of the cudgel. Her anger was now roused to the highest pitch, and the contest between man and beast assumed a most deadly and savage character. Many rounds were fought, the man miraculously escaping every time without a scratch. At last, her repeated failures and his repeated blows began to tell on her courage, and, instead of trying to meet him face to face, she constantly endeavoured to get behind him; but his cudgel met her at every turn, and, step by step, she was driven back, until both of them were at the foot of the tree, where the fight was renewed with increased fury, every whine of the cubs serving to stimulate the mother to further and more violent attacks. The blows of the staff fell so fast and vigorously that at last the bear began to retreat to the forest. She got as far as the first bushes, but, on looking round, saw the man approaching the tree to capture the cubs, and at once came back to renew the struggle.

There stood the two antagonists, the man guarding the cubs, but unable to touch them, and the mother growling not many steps away. At this instant, another woodman rode into the glade. The hunter called him, and he came towards the tree; but when he heard the noise, and saw the bear, his first movement was reversed, and he turned to fly. On second thoughts he decided to assist, and in obedience to the directions of the man with the stick, he took two large leather bags from his saddle, and laid them upon the ground. Then he climbed the tree, brought down the cubs, and tied them up in the bags.

The mother was furious, and several times made a

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rush at the men, with the same result as before—she was felled with the cudgel. The peasant now placed the bags on his horse and led the way home. The other man followed, beating off the enemy at every charge. After a walk of nearly two hours they reached the village, the bear still bringing up the rear; but when they actually got to the cottages, she turned round, went back to the forest, and was never seen again. One scarcely knows which to admire most, the pluck of the hunter, or the courage and maternal affection of the beast.

If we travel on towards the north-east we reach the peninsula of Kamschatka, where the bears are attacked in various ways. Sometimes snares are laid for them. A heavy trap is supported in the air by a scaffolding sufficiently high, and underneath, some kind of bait is placed. No sooner does the bear smell this than he advances to devour it. As he enters the snare he shakes the feeble support, and a heavy beam then falls and crushes his head, or, perhaps, the whole of his body. The trap is visited from time to time, and the bait frequently renewed, till the bear is caught; the hunter may have to wait a whole year before his plans are crowned with success. This method of capturing bears requires no great boldness or fatigue; but there is another method, very frequently adopted, which requires both strength and courage.

The native goes out with his gun, a lance or spear, and a knife. His stock of provisions is made up in a bundle, and consists of about twenty salted fish. Thus lightly equipped, he penetrates into the thickest part of the woods, especially those places which he thinks likely to be tenanted by a bear; for example, among briars, or among the rushes on the borders of

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lakes and rivers. Here he posts himself, and waits with patience and intrepidity the approach of his adversary. If necessary, he will remain in hiding for a whole week together, till the bear makes his appearance. The moment it comes within his reach, he fixes a forked stick in the ground, rests his rifle in the fork, and takes a careful aim. It is seldom that, with the smallest ball, he does not strike the bear either in the head, or near the shoulder, which latter is the most vital part.

But he is obliged to reload again instantly, because the bear, if the first shot has not disabled him, runs at the hunter, who has not always time for a second shot. He then has recourse to his lance, and with this meets the animal's attack. His life is now in great danger unless he gives the bear a mortal thrust. In such combats, as may well be supposed, the man is not always the victor; but this does not prevent the inhabitants of Kamschatka from daily exposing their lives. The frequent examples of the death of their countrymen have no effect upon them; indeed, they rarely go out without confessing that it is either to conquer or to die, but the severity of the alternative neither deters nor terrifies them.

These Kamschatka bears make their meals chiefly off fish which they catch for themselves in the rivers. Sometimes, when hunger renders them rather bolder than usual, they will even enter the villages. A hungry bear wandered into a village in this part of the world, and found the outer door of one of the houses wide open. He entered, accidentally closing the door after him. Over the fire was a kettle of boiling water, which had been left there by the woman of the house. The bear smelt it, and burnt his nose.

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This made him excessively angry, and he determined to be revenged on the kettle. He folded his arms round it and hugged it to his breast with all his strength, trying to crush it—only, of course, to be severely burnt. His horrible growling from rage and pain brought the neighbours to the spot, and a few shots soon ended his misery and his life.

As a rule, all native hunters, whatever be their other virtues or vices, possess at least the one virtue of courage. Pluck and endurance are essential parts of their outfit. But that cowards are occasionally found among them, the following story, which was first related by Atkinson, will show.

Two men set out in pursuit of a bear, and after wandering about for some time, came upon his track, quite fresh in the long, dewy grass. He was evidently near; so the men moved cautiously, and prepared for action. Presently a loud growl saluted their ears, the bear sprang out of a thicket about thirty feet away, and stood sniffing the breeze, and gazing at the intruders.

One hunter, a man reputed for his skill and courage, fired and hit the bear, but not in a vital part. In an instant the wounded creature charged, and the other man, who was less experienced, reserved his shot till the bear was only twenty feet away. His rifle missed fire, and the bear raised himself on his hind legs, and, tearing the earth beneath him, rushed on his first assailant, striking him down with a blow that stripped his scalp, and turned it over on his face. He seized the man's arm, and commenced to gnaw and crush it to the bone, beginning at the hand, and eating it upwards towards the shoulder.

The companion of the wounded man, instead of

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loading and firing, no sooner saw the dreadful way in which the bear was mangling his friend, than he turned away and fled. Late in the evening he got back to his neighbours, and told them what had happened, inventing all kinds of excuses for his cowardice. It was too late that night for braver men to make any effort on behalf of their lost comrade, but at daylight a party set out to seek for his remains, taking the coward with them as their guide. He conducted them through the forest to the spot where the fight had occurred, but no remains of the lost hunter were discovered except his rifle and some pieces of torn clothing. It was evident, upon examination of the grass, that the man had been dragged into the thick forest. A most diligent pursuit was at once entered upon. Sometimes the track was lost, but the hunters were too well skilled in their profession to be beaten, and at length they discovered the bear's retreat. He had dragged his prey into a dense tangle of wood and bushes, and to render it still more secure, had broken off a great quantity of branches, and heaped them over the body.

The wood was quickly removed, when, to the utter astonishment of every one, it was discovered that the hunter, though frightfully mutilated, and quite insensible, was still alive. Two long poles were cut, and saddle-cloths attached to them. One horse was placed in front, another at the back, and the ends of the poles were tied to the stirrups. The man was laid on the saddle-cloths, and, as soon as he had been made as comfortable as the circumstances would permit, the return march was commenced. He was carried to a Russian settlement where there was a hospital, and so well tended by the doctors that he

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survived, though for a long time he remained quite unconscious of everything around him. After rather more than two months had elapsed, he began to recognise the people and objects around him, and to talk sensibly upon most subjects. Almost the first question he asked was as to what had become of the bear. He had always borne a great reputation as a hunter, and he looked upon his defeat as a great disgrace. Day after day he talked of nothing else but the bear's victory, and of his own shame. He was always asking for his rifle, so that he might go and kill "Michael Ivanitch," that is, the bear. The doctors discussed his case, and decided that he was out of his mind. As he grew stronger, there arose in him so passionate a longing to have another fight with his powerful and ferocious enemy, that it was considered necessary to place him under some slight restraint.

By the beginning of the autumn he was pronounced almost completely recovered. It was hoped that he had forgotten all about his adventure, and it was not considered any longer necessary to keep such a careful watch over his movements. He bided his time, and, when he got the chance, secretly left the hospital, and went to his cottage. There was no one at home except some young children, so that he was able to provide himself, unhindered, with an axe, a rifle, ammunition, and a loaf of black bread. In the evening he left the village without having been seen by anybody but the little ones, and he was soon lost in the forest.

When it was known that he had escaped, fears were entertained for his safety, and search parties were sent out in all directions—but without success. He

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was nowhere to be found! But when more than a week had elapsed, he walked carelessly into the hospital, carrying the skin of a huge black bear on his shoulders. As he threw it down on the floor he exclaimed: "There! I told you I'd have him."

He had gone to the woods, not in a spirit of revenge against the bear, but because he could not stand the shame of defeat; and now that his reputation was once more established, he was perfectly happy. His health and reason were soon fully restored, and this was not by any means the last bear that fell before his deadly rifle.

Between Kamschatka and the mainland of Siberia lies the long, narrow island of Sakhalin, inhabited by a tribe of Ainus. These people have been little visited, and little has been written concerning them. But about twenty years ago, Mr. R. D. Howard obtained permission from the Russians to spend some time amongst them, and in one of the sections of his intensely interesting book, *Life with Trans-Siberian Savages*, he gives an excellent account of an Ainu bear hunt.

One morning, a boy, very much out of breath, crawled into the hut where Mr. Howard was sleeping, and handed the old chief, who occupied the same apartment, a short green stick, which was really a message from a number of men who had gone out the previous morning on a long trapping tour, and towards evening had unexpectedly come across a large bear. As they were not sufficiently well armed to attack the animal, the boy had been sent home for reinforcements.

Within a few minutes of his arrival all was bustle and excitement. Some of the men were straightening out hide-ropes, some were busily sharpening knives,

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and two others were engaged, apparently with great caution and care, in making poisoned arrows.

When all was ready, Howard, with blanket and rifle, joined the party, and trudged along in the hope of seeing how Ainus captured bears. The party was led by the boy. After about two hours' walking they joined the original three, who were waiting not far from the entrance to a cave in the hillside, the mouth of which was so much overgrown with shrubs and bushes that it could scarcely be seen.

The plan of campaign arranged by the Ainus was simple enough in outline, if not quite so easy of execution. They were to make such a solid display of force that the bear would think twice before attacking them. They would shoot poisoned arrows at him from several sides, and so bewilder him. Then they would suddenly rush upon him with their knives, and kill him before he could do anybody any damage. If he got away from them, they would follow him up, for he would be certain to fall before long, when the poison on the arrows had taken effect.

"At a moderate distance from the mouth of the cave," says Howard, "the men, in their usual way, formed a flattened semicircle. Each one of them had carefully selected and got behind his tree, had got his knife-sheath in position, his bow strung taut. All the Ainus were ready for the attack, but apparently the bear was not. I took up my position behind a very large tree a little lower down the hill, in the rear of the centre of the line of attack, my idea being to have a good view of the struggle, and, if the animal got away from the Ainus, to give them a little display of rifle practice, and save them the trouble of a long run in finally securing him.

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“It seemed very annoying that we should have been brought all that distance for nothing, and just as stupid that the three Ainus on watch could have allowed him to escape during the night without detecting it. Yet so it seemed ; and so, after nearly an hour’s yelling and stone-throwing, most of them seemed to think ; for, of the alleged bear, all their efforts had failed to obtain sight or sound. I could see that one of the more impatient ones was proposing that one of the others should just step inside the cave and settle the question. Indeed, they all seemed to be urging this upon one another, each, as if familiar with the highest teaching, generously preferring the other to himself

“At this deadlock a couple of them were detached to make a fire at the mouth of the cave, which, if the bear were really there, would smoke him out. Fortunately, the wind lay just in the right direction. The smoke rose in thick volumes, the branches crackled and blazed, when, sure enough, greatly to our relief, there was a low whine and a grunt ; it was so low that we could only just hear it, but it was loud enough to settle completely every possibility of doubt.

“As the flames rose higher, Bruin seemed to fear he was being cut off, and, frantic with rage, with one tremendous growl he burst right through the fire tramping the burning branches under foot.

“On seeing the number of his assailants, for an instant he stood at bay. But in that instant, seven or eight whizzing arrows were sticking into him. Seizing one arrow after another with his claws, and finding that those he could reach and break he couldn’t detach, he seemed to become discouraged. Just then an arrow struck him right in one eye and stuck there.

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"Howling furiously, his only thought now seemed to be revenge. Springing like a squirrel, he struck the first man on his right, ripping open his shoulder, and spinning him against the next tree; whilst the knife, which in ordinary cases the man would have plunged into the bear's chest, was flying a dozen feet away.

"The man on the left, trying to take advantage of this movement to send home a fatal thrust, now stepped forward, the others preparing to follow up the attack simultaneously; but as quick as a cat he was now on the left man in the same manner, whose knife also was now yards away. Holding this man by the paws, the bear, now on his haunches, lifted him right off the ground, and with jaws wide open, was poising for the final crunch and hug.

"Running rapidly forward up the hill, dropping on my left knee, I put my life, as it were, into a steady aim. Ping went the bullet! Down dropped the man! And with a dead thud, over fell the bear, just as a tree falls with the last stroke of the woodman's axe! Had I killed the man? The bear, at any rate, was done for; as supple as a rag it lay there, without a groan or a motion. It was as dead as a door nail.

"My ball, which I had aimed at his wide-open mouth, had struck right in the arch of the upper jaw, passed upwards out at the top of his head, shattering his skull; the brain having thus been traversed at its most vital part, the animal's death was instantaneous.

"The man who had been dropped appeared to be as dead as the bear, for, apart from his bleeding wounds, the breath had been squeezed out of his body, and two or three ribs broken in the process; but,

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fortunately, after a while he began to take short occasional breaths, and in about an hour was quite himself again.

“The first man attacked had a dreadfully ragged shoulder and torn hand, and had been stunned by the shock caused by the swiftness with which he was catapulted against the tree; but he, too, gradually regained consciousness. I immediately took charge of the wounded, and within a couple of hours both were able to walk.”

CHAPTER VII

AMONG SIBERIAN HILLS AND FORESTS

ALL Siberian tribes live largely on the bodies of the game that they take for the sake of their furs ; but one tribe, the Tungoose, never eats reindeer till everything else has failed. Subsisting as all these people do on game, they become very expert in its capture. In fact, they can only live at all by carefully studying the haunts and habits of the creatures that find them food, clothes, and wealth.

The following account of Tungoose methods of hunting and trapping is more or less true for all the tribes. The native, if shooting, never pulls the trigger, or releases the bow-string, until he feels quite sure that he is going to hit that at which he aims. He carries a ponderous, old-fashioned rifle that fires a bullet no bigger than a pea, by means of a very slight sprinkling of powder. Armed with this clumsy weapon, he approaches his prey by crawling on hands and knees, and, finally, by worming his way along the ground on his stomach. When he is within what he considers safe shooting distance, he halts, and fixes in the ground two forked sticks on which he rests his weapon ; and, after taking a long and steady aim, fires his tiny bullet, and rarely misses his mark.

The native in search of provisions, or furs, goes into the woods when the winter begins, accompanied only

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by his dog. He takes with him a supply of flour, a pot in which to boil meat, and his gun. He puts on a pair of snow-shoes made from a strip of birch-wood, with a hairy lining underneath to prevent slipping, and makes his way through the interminable forest until the dog scents an animal, and forces it to take refuge in a tree, at the foot of which it remains barking till his master comes up and shoots the game in his usually cool and leisurely fashion. An experienced hunter can tell in a moment, by feeling the track of an animal in the snow, whether it has passed recently, or whether the footprints are of older date.

But it is in the science of trapping that the natives of Siberia surpass all other races. By the month of October the ground is covered with snow, and the furs of the animals are in their finest condition. Then parties are formed which go into the forests, each man harnessing himself to a light sledge which contains his provisions and scanty baggage. When the hunting-grounds are not more than two hundred miles away, the whole family go together; but usually the men are unaccompanied by their wives and children.

When they arrive at a likely spot they first build a hut, and then they disperse to set their traps or dig pitfalls in the frozen earth. These are visited daily, and on them the natives depend for their supply of animal food. Late in December the party breaks up, and the hunters go off to the fairs to sell and barter.

To get to the grounds the Kalmucks have often to ride over a narrow ridge of rocks called a "bomb." Along this only one horse can pass at a time. If it happened that two horses met on such a ridge, one of them would have to be thrown over, as it is impossible either to pass or turn round. Across one of

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these "bombs" went Atkinson, the Siberian explorer, in company with two Siberian hunters, one of whom was called Yepta.

Describing his adventures, Atkinson says: "When we had reached the track by which the Kalmuck hunters ascend these mountains, Yepta ordered a halt, and sent one of his companions on foot to the other end of this fearful ridge, hid from our view by some high crags, round which we had to ride. In somewhat less than half-an-hour he returned, but without his cap—this had been left to signal to any hunters who might come up, that a party was crossing the 'bomb.'

"Yepta and the hunter told me to drop the reins on my horse's neck, and he would go over with perfect safety. The former led the van; I followed behind, as desired, at a distance of three or four paces. For the first twenty yards the sensation was not agreeable. After that I felt perfect confidence in the animal, and was sure, if left to himself, he would carry me safely over. The whole distance was about five hundred paces, and occupied us about a quarter of an hour in crossing. In some places it was fearful to look down—on one side the rocks were nearly perpendicular for five or six hundred feet; and on the other, so steep that no man could stand upon them. When over, I turned round and watched the others thread their way across; it was truly terrific to look at them on the narrow and stony path—one false step, and both horse and rider must be hurled into the valley a thousand feet below! These are the perils through which daring sable-hunters often ride. With them it is a necessity—they do it to obtain food, and not for bravado or foolhardy recklessness."

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Brave as all these tribes are in the face of such perils, they are apt to be very much afraid of spirits, ghosts, and fiends. Bush tells a story of a fearless old bear-hunter who went out in his canoe after ducks, and was not seen again for several hours. When he did return he was wet from head to foot, and his eyes were nearly leaping out of their sockets. It was evident that something had upset him seriously, and he seated himself apart from his companions, looking very solemn, and refusing to say a single word to any one. As he had brought back no game, Bush thought this might be the reason of his sadness ; so he ventured to ask him what was the matter, but the only answer he got was, "The devil ! the devil !" About an hour later, when he was a little more composed, he condescended to explain what had happened. As he had been paddling along watching for game, he had suddenly been startled by hearing a sharp whistle at no great distance from him. He looked in the direction from which the sound came, but he saw nothing, and the next minute he heard it again behind him. Then he was quite satisfied that it was the devil, and he became so frightened that he upset his canoe and fell into the water. Bush tried to persuade him that the sounds were probably made by some bird, but he remained entirely unconvinced.

Some of the tribes believe that certain of their number have a charm by which they can prevent a rifle shooting straight. They merely say a few simple words—the right ones, of course—and then the enchanted gun is worthless. The story sounds silly enough to us, but a stolid, unsentimental German told Cottrell how one of the natives in the district where he lived had ruined his sport for him. The

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German had been employing some of the natives in making a building, and, having quarrelled with one of them for something that had gone wrong, had dismissed him. Soon after the disagreement, the employer went shooting birds. He had been particularly fortunate, scarcely missing a shot the whole morning. The native was out shooting too, and on meeting his former master, went up to him and said : " You no kill more birds with that gun ; no kill more ! "

The German understood quite well what the man meant ; but he neither believed what he heard, nor lost his temper. He merely laughed at his old servant, who repeated the words. Presently he saw a bird on the top of a tree, fired at it, and missed. He reloaded, and fired eight times at this and other birds, but never touched a feather. Thinking he might have been made unsteady by what the native had said to him, and that he was nervous, he begged a friend who was with him, an excellent shot, to take the rifle and try his luck with it. The friend did so, and with the same result ; he, too, did not so much as touch a feather. The following morning, when the owner of the rifle had slept over the matter, he tried the rifle at a mark, and still he could do nothing. The story, unfortunately, does not state whether the power of the gun was ever recovered.

The most valuable of the smaller fur-bearing animals is the sable, a single skin of the first class selling for as much as two or three hundred pounds. The sable lives in Siberia and Kamschatka, but as sea air has the effect of coarsening and thickening the fur, the sables of Kamschatka have coarser coats than those trapped inland.

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We are indebted to an old French traveller, de Lesseps, for an interesting account of catching a sable in Kamschatka. He and his party noticed a number of ravens all hovering over the same spot and skimming continually along the ground. The regular direction of their flight led de Lesseps to suspect that they were attracted by some kind of prey. As a matter of fact, they were pursuing a sable which was seated upon a birch tree. Now, the travellers were just as eager as the birds to secure the little creature. The quickest and surest way to have effected its capture would have been to shoot it; but there were no guns among the party. They had left them behind at the village, as they had only come out for a ramble.

One of the Kamschatdales solved the difficulty by undertaking to catch the sable with a cord. He took a piece of thin rope that had been used to fasten the horses, and while he was making a running knot in it, he sent his dogs, who well knew what was expected of them, to surround the tree. The animal, intent upon watching them, either from fear or from natural stupidity, did not stir, and contented itself with stretching out its neck to the hunter when it was presented with the cord. The head was twice in the noose, but each time the knot slipped.

At length, the sable having thrown itself upon the ground, the dogs flew to seize it, but it soon freed itself, and with claws and teeth laid hold of the nose of one of the dogs, and gave him such a merciless welcome that he was glad to retreat. As the men were anxious to take the animal alive, they kept back the dogs, and the sable at once ran up the tree, where, for the third time, the noose, which had been tied

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anew, was presented to it; but it was not till the fourth attempt that the Kamschatdale succeeded.

One would not have imagined that an animal which has such an appearance of cunning, and a fair amount of pluck upon occasion, would have permitted itself to be caught in so stupid a manner, and would itself have placed its head in the snare that was held up. But de Lesseps vouches for the fact, and states that this easy method of catching sables was a considerable resource to the Kamschatdales, who were obliged to pay their government taxes in sable skins.

The Kirghiz tribes train a large bird, the bear-coot, to hunt for them. But he sometimes hunts on his own account. A large maral, or stag, had been hunted down by three wolves that had just seized him, and the ravenous brutes were tearing their victim to pieces while it was still alive. Two men who saw the incident instantly prepared to shoot the wolves, and crept quietly along under cover to get within range. When they were on the point of firing, they saw two large bear-coots, or eagles, poising aloft, and preparing to swoop.

Presently one of the eagles shot down like an arrow, and was almost instantly followed by the other. When they were within about forty yards of the group, the wolves caught sight of them, and stood on the defensive, showing their yellow fangs, and uttering savage growls. In a few seconds, one wolf was struck by one of the bear-coots, who dug one talon into his back, and the other into his neck, and then, with his beak, tore out the liver of the tortured beast. A second wolf was seized by the other bear-coot, and almost immediately they were both as dead as the animal they had hunted.

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The third wolf would have escaped, but one of the men shot him. The report of the rifle startled the bear-coots, but the men kept under cover, and watched the birds begin their repast upon the stag.

The Chinese, too, use tame eagles for hunting, but rather as decoys than for purposes of direct attack. Every year thousands of Chinese go into Mongolia in order to capture wild eagles for the sake of their feathers, which are used in the making of fans. Some of these feathers are black with a certain amount of white near the middle, others are white with black spots, and others are half white and half black. Only a few feathers from each bird can be used in a fine fan, and hence the cost of such fans is very high, ranging from three to five pounds when made entirely of one variety of feather. If the feathers are mixed, then the fan is much cheaper.

The men who go eagle-catching take with them a number of tamed eagles, which they carry on poles across their shoulders. When they get near the hunting-grounds they put a quantity of small and highly-smelling fish in a number of nests, and set the eagles free. The birds take possession of the nests, and soon attract the attention of the wild eagles in the vicinity. These, fearing no ill, come up to feed on the fish, and make friends with the new-comers. Nets are so arranged that, when there are sufficient wild eagles in the nests, the nets can be raised and the birds taken.

The maral is found in all the higher regions of certain of the Siberian mountains, and affords good sport for hunters who are fearless enough to follow him into his haunts among the precipices, glaciers, and snowy peaks that he frequents.

Two men were out hunting the maral for food and

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for the antlers, which are highly valued by the Chinese. They had followed the game far up into the mountains, and had shot one when night fell. They slept near the spoil, and the following morning started again in pursuit of another. After several hours' climbing, they saw a magnificent specimen with horns worth at least £17. They followed him from valley to valley, till at last he took refuge in a high craggy region.

His pursuers were not men to be frightened by a few obstacles ; so they scaled the rugged height over which he had passed, but only to find that he had disappeared. They persisted in the chase, catching sight every now and then of the fine branching horns. At last they drove the stag into a long, narrow gap, the sides of which were almost perpendicular, and absolutely unclimbable, and the further end of which overhung a precipice several hundred feet in depth. There was no chance of escape ; the prize was theirs.

As the men got to the mouth of the gorge, the animal bounded forward among the fallen rocks, and by the time they were within a hundred feet of him, he came to a standstill, but not on the brink of the chasm. The beast looked up and down the narrow passage, and seemed afraid to move in either direction. The men judged that there must be something between the animal and the end of the ravine—probably a tiger ; for tigers were often found in this district. Not knowing for what purpose they might require their guns, they hesitated to shoot, but approached warily. The stag moved slowly away, and was almost on the edge of the precipice, when two huge bears sprang into the ravine close behind him.

Opposite the end of the gorge there was a tall



A BRAVE STAG

Two hunters were pursuing a Waral stag in the Siberian mountains when suddenly two bears joined in the pursuit between them and their quarry. When the stag reached the edge of a precipice it took a magnificent flying leap and just reached a detached column of rock. One of the bears followed, only to fail, and was dashed to pieces.

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pinnacle of rock. It rose from the valley below, and was separated by over thirty feet from the side of the chasm. The stag suddenly bounded into the air, and, with a magnificent flying leap, came down on the detached column of rock. One of the bears tried to imitate the stag, but fell into the chasm, and was killed by being dashed against the stones. The other was a little wiser, and satisfied himself by remaining on the brink of destruction, growling angrily and savagely, first at the stag that had escaped, and then at the hunters as they approached. A leaden bullet, well directed, soon put an end to his complaints, and sent him rolling down to his companion below.

The maral stood erect on his pinnacle, and looked at the hunters without showing any sign of fear. They were so struck with his brilliant escape, his present equanimity, and his graceful form and noble horns, that they agreed to let him go free, although they could easily have shot him from where they stood. They noted a number of peculiar marks on the animal's body, in order that they might recognise him should they ever meet him again. They found it an exceedingly difficult matter to retrace their steps, for, in the excitement of the chase, they had been led through all kinds of perilous places without noticing quite where they were going.

The following day they descended into the valley to look for the bears they had shot. Then they discovered that the maral had re-leaped the chasm on to a ledge below the brink, and had escaped. When the men joined their companions, they told the story, and described the animal; and, by common consent, he was never more molested, but allowed to remain king of his native wilds.

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The natives of Central Asia not only use eagles for hunting deer, but they also train them to hunt the fox, the most cunning of beasts. It is only in winter that they indulge in this sport. They then ride out into the country until they have set the fox in motion. As soon as he is seen the eagles are let loose, and then there is a short but frantic chase. The eagles get rapidly ahead, followed by swift hunting-dogs. The horsemen have to be content to be in the rear of the procession. The eagles "stoop" at the fox and try to turn it, upon which the dogs seize their prey and bring it down. As the birds are very heavy, they are not carried on the arms, as in the case of hawking, but upon a wooden support fixed to the saddle.

The Kirghiz tribes have great objections to any one else trespassing in their hunting-grounds, and if ever they find a hunter in what they regard as their preserves, they will, if possible, capture the wanderer, and sell him as a slave at some inland town, whence it is extremely improbable that he will ever return.

Among the men who accompanied Atkinson across Siberia was one who had once ventured into Kirghiz territory, and had only escaped from the hands of these lawless men by good fortune, backed with great courage. He was out hunting, and had become separated from his two companions. He knew that it was dangerous to attempt to return alone, so he searched, but in vain, for his friends. At last he started home by himself. He had descended one of the ravines, and was near the outlet to the plain, when he saw a body of Kirghiz at a distance of about two hundred yards. Some were sitting on the ground ; a few others were attending to their horses. The

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minute they caught sight of the hunter, they rushed to their steeds, and sprang into the saddles. The man realised at once that he was in danger of capture and subsequent slavery.

It was impossible to pass the foe, and to retreat up the ravine was almost as impossible, as the Kirghiz were mounted on swift horses, which would soon overtake him. He had, bound on his horse, a large maral that he had shot that day. This he cut loose with his knife that it might not hamper his movements. By the time he had done this, several men were galloping towards him ; he turned and rushed up the pass. He had no time to look back, but by the shouts he could tell that his foes were gaining on him. He unslung his rifle, determined that the first man who approached him should suffer for his act. He urged his horse to its utmost speed, and fled like the wind, with the Kirghiz shrieking like fiends in the rear.

Presently he reached the mouth of a very narrow ravine that entered the gorge from the right. Into this he sprang, and hurriedly ascended the bed of a small stream that came trickling down. He had not gone more than twenty feet when the first of his pursuers arrived at the mouth of the ravine, believing that the victim was caught. The hunter jumped down from his horse, lifted his rifle, and pointed it down the ravine. There was only room for one man to ascend it at a time, and as no one cared to be the first to die, the Kirghiz drew back for a moment.

A mass of rock projected into the ravine a little higher up, and the quick sight and intelligence of the hunter told him that, if he could but reach this, he would be in such an impregnable position that he might easily face an enemy three times as numerous

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as that which was now bent on his capture, as he would be able to shelter behind it. He retreated slowly towards the desired point, covering with his rifle any one who showed the slightest intention of following him. This threat to shoot kept the foe in check, and in a short time he was safe in a kind of natural fort about thirty feet above the bed of the little stream. From his point of vantage he could pick off the men one by one as they approached, and reload before they were able to make a dash at him. For about half-an-hour no one was seen or heard. Then several men were noticed carefully examining the face of the cliff, apparently with the intention of climbing round and getting at the refugee from above.

Several pieces of rock, which they dislodged as they ascended, came tumbling down, giving warning of their presence and their movements. The hunter now scanned the face of the cliffs as if he had been watching for the eye of a sable, and presently he caught a glimpse of two men creeping along the ledges towards a point above his position. He called out to them: "Take care! You are not going to trap me like a marten in his hole without getting your fingers bitten."

The Kirghiz in the pass began shouting in order to divert his attention, but he kept his eye on the cliff, and soon saw a man's hand grasping a projecting point of rock. He raised his rifle, and waited. In a few moments a head appeared. It was enough. Bang went the rifle! The Kirghiz bounded out and sped down into the ravine, to fall crushed and dead at the feet of his companions. The latter shrieked with rage, but took good care to keep under shelter.

The other man on the ledge crouched behind the

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rocks. He had no ambition to descend into the valley in the hurried and disastrous manner that had been forced upon his friend. The Kirghiz now contented themselves with keeping watch in the pass to prevent the hunter's escape. From time to time they peeped out from behind a corner to see what he was doing. As they showed no inclination to renew the attack at close quarters, he lit his pipe, sat down to smoke, and patiently waited for the darkness, under cover of which he intended to make his escape on foot. He had not smoked long, when he heard a commotion made by the Kirghiz galloping, for all they were worth, away from the pass.

They had not gone far when the report of a rifle rang out along the hillside, and he heard the clatter of approaching hoofs. He knew now that his companions were at hand, and he felt that he could easily afford to spend the bullet that he had for so long been keeping in reserve in his gun. He watched one of his foes pass the ravine, but he stopped the second with a fine shot, and sent him and his horse rolling over and over. When his rifle cracked, his comrades gave a shout, to which he answered with another—a very joyful and hearty one—for he was saved.

With the exception of the bear, the only fur-bearing quadruped indigenous to Siberia that is ever dangerous is the wolf, whose only good point is his skin. This skin makes excellent clothing for the winter, though much too fine and expensive for poor people. It keeps out the cold well, and is most commonly used in the form of a short jacket worn outside all the other clothing. It is said that the wolves of Siberia do not attack men, but that those of China do; and the explanation offered is, that the Chinaman runs

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away, while the man of the north does not. There seems to be some truth in the statement, and Siberian natives tell many stories in support of it, one of which we will give presently. But better confirmation of the fact that a wolf is afraid of a brave man is contained in a story told by Mr. Bush, of the Russo-American Telegraph Company, concerning his friend Young.

Three miles away from their station, away on the bleak tundra, there were several small lakes that were frequently visited by the men for the purpose of fishing, through the ice, for trout. In this they were quite successful, and nearly every fine day some one of them would go out with a line, carrying an axe with which to make and keep clear an opening in the ice. On this occasion Young was alone, and unprotected, save for the axe which he carried with him. As he went along he heard the howling of the wolves on the adjoining tundra, but this was such a common occurrence that he took no notice of it.

While fishing near the middle of a small lake, he was startled by hearing the cries of wolves quite close to him, and, glancing hurriedly in the direction from which the sound came, he saw a large buck reindeer dashing along the shore, pursued by seven full-grown famished-looking wolves of very large size. Young seized his axe, but kept perfectly still, hoping the animals would not notice him. They all passed him but one, and this one, seeing him there alone, directed the whole band towards him.

As he anticipated a severe struggle, he sprang to his feet, swung his arms and axe about, and shouted at the top of his voice. The wolves were quite startled by the noise and the ludicrous motions he made, and

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squatted down on the ice about a hundred feet away, looking intently at him. But a minute later they plucked up their courage, and made another dash for him. As he was quite satisfied with the effect of his first vocal and gymnastic display, he repeated his actions, this time with increased intensity, yelling and jumping about like a madman. He darted towards them with a particularly piercing yell, and the whole pack turned tail and fled, preferring to chase the quieter and less eccentric deer.

And now for a Mongol story.

On the borders between Mongolia and China there was a threshing floor which was frequented by a huge wolf that had destroyed several Chinamen. So great was the fear inspired by this huge beast, that no one could be got to go near the place and carry on the work of cleaning the harvested grain. In another town, not far away, was a Mongolian who was reputed to be a brave man and a skilful shot ; so a deputation of farmers and shopkeepers, and anybody else who had nothing particular to do, and wanted to be in the procession, went to him and asked him to come and rid them of their terrible foe. As they were willing to pay him well for his trouble, and as he had not the slightest fear of the wolf, he agreed to go and sleep on the floor amongst the grain.

The wolf appeared as usual, but finding a man who would not run away, ran away himself. This went on for several nights, and the Mongolian declared that he would remain there no longer unless some of the Chinamen came and watched with him. When the wolf next put in an appearance, he found some of his old friends ready to run away and give him sport and supper. Over one another the Chinese tumbled

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in their hurry and fear. Now was the Mongol's chance. He quietly waited for the wolf, and as the beast came along, shot it dead on the spot.

Although the Siberian wolf does not appear to be dangerous, it is oftener trapped than hunted, for it is so cute that hunting it becomes a laborious and uncertain operation.

One favourite kind of trap consists of two circular pens placed one inside the other so as to allow of a small, narrow passage between them. The walls of these pens are about ten feet high. There is a door in the wall of the outer pen, but the inner one is completely closed. In the inner one a live deer is placed, and the trap is then ready. The wolf scents the deer, sneaks round the outer palisade, discovers the little door, and pushes it open. He enters the passage, walks round, looking for an opening into the pen which contains the deer, and presently comes back to a point near that from which he started. His way is barred by the open door; but as he moves forward he shuts this, and so prevents his own escape. In the morning the trapper spears or shoots him from the top of the pen, and releases the unhurt, but frightened deer.

So far so good! But the trapper occasionally meets on his homeward journey with some animal, such as the tiger or the panther, which he has little expected to see in such a place. The tiger, it is true, is rarely seen in northern Siberia; but if driven by hunger, when following its prey, it may be met with far beyond its ordinary limits. It is so seldom seen that in many places the peasants do not even know it by name. The panther is almost as infrequent a visitor. Holman is our authority for the following story of an

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incident which occurred on the frontier between China and Siberia.

A young man was inspecting his traps in the woods, when he observed the footsteps of an animal which were strange to him. He went home and told his father what he had seen; whereupon the latter mounted his horse, took an axe in his hand, and, followed by his dog, went off to see what kind of a creature the stranger might be. The animal was soon discovered hiding between some rocks, but it at once moved away to another lair, still pursued by the man on horseback. As the latter approached, the animal sprang upon the horse, placed one foot on the neck and the other on the haunches of the quivering steed, and opened his mouth to despatch the pursuer. The man instantly thrust his left hand and arm down the beast's throat, while he killed him with the axe which he held in his right hand; but the intrepid fellow's arm was so much lacerated that he entirely lost the use of it. The animal proved to be a panther, and was subsequently sent to St. Petersburg to be preserved in the museum.

CHAPTER VIII

ON THE SHORES AND ISLANDS OF THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

THE chief creatures hunted in the waters and on the shores of the North Pacific Ocean are the fur-seal and the sea-otter. Professor C. Lloyd Morgan, in his *Animal Sketches*, has given a very graphic picture of the uses of the fur-seal. He says: "The seals provide nearly all the necessary articles for the simple life of the Aleutians. Their skins are stretched on frames to form his canoe; their dried flesh becomes a choice article of food; their blubber is used for fuel; and the oil from their fat is burnt in lamps; their sinews are twisted into thread; the lining of their coats is tanned into leather for boots, the soles of which are made from their fin-like flippers; the intestines are dried and worked up into water-proof clothing; their stomachs are turned inside out and converted into oil-jars or receptacles for preserved meat; their very whiskers are plucked out and sold to the Chinese as pickers for their opium pipes; and their babies are stolen from their murdered mothers and sent to the Zoos of Europe."

The fur-seals upon the American islands are killed under government regulations and supervision, and only the members of one particular company are allowed to take them. On the Asiatic side the natives

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frequently go to the coast to kill fur-seals, hair-seals, and other sea-animals.

Three Kamschatdales repaired in the latter part of April to one of their usual hunting-grounds, where they found the sea, for a considerable distance, covered with ice. Each man had a sledge to which five dogs were harnessed, and, although the wind was blowing strongly off the land, without any hesitation they went on the ice in search of seals, believing it to be firmly attached to the shore.

Not far away there was another band of their own countrymen engaged in the same occupation. The men whose story we are relating discovered some seals a long way off, and unthinkingly went out to them. They killed two, and were preparing to bind them upon the sledges with thongs, when one of the party, who had been lagging behind a little, came to them in a state of great alarm, crying out that the ice was moving and that all the other Kamschatdales had got ashore. This news alarmed them so much that they left the seals on the ice, and, seating themselves on their sledges, urged their dogs to their utmost speed, in order to get back to land. Unfortunately they were too late. The ice became separated from the shore, and they saw between themselves and the mainland a channel of water at least a hundred yards wide. The ice on the edge of the channel began to break into pieces under their weight, forcing them to return to a stronger and thicker part. The wind now rose to a gale, and blew them out to sea, where, the swell being heavy, the ice began to break all round them, leaving them at last on one solid piece about forty or fifty feet in circumference.

They were soon out of sight of land, driven before

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a gale of wind, and rolling so dreadfully in the heavy sea that it was only with the greatest difficulty they were able to keep their footing on their slippery deck. Each man had a staff five feet long, furnished with an iron point at one end. These were driven firmly in the ice, and men, dogs, and sledges were all fastened tightly to them. Had it not been for this arrangement they would all have been thrown into the sea. They became sea-sick, weak, and disheartened, but one among them kept a cheerful heart, and continually tried to encourage the rest by telling them they would be sure to be thrown on some coast.

After two days the wind abated a little, the weather cleared up, and they saw, not far away, land which they recognised as one of the Kurile Islands. They now fully expected to drift on to its shore; but as it grew dark the wind veered completely round, and blew with more violence than ever. The piece of ice was tossed about in the most terrifying manner, and several times the staves and thongs were in danger of being broken by the violent concussion of heavy waves against the frozen mass.

All that night, and all the next day, the storm continued with ever-increasing violence. On the morning of the fourth day, before sunrise, they discovered that their ice-raft had been driven among a number of other blocks of ice, and that they were now shut in on all sides. The wind had dropped—the waves had subsided—everything was calm and still. When it was quite light, and they could look around and survey their situation, they were both pleased and astonished to discover that they were home again. They had been blown from Kamschatka to the Kurile Isles and back again on a lump of ice! They had

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suffered inexpressible torture from thirst and hunger, and they were so weak that they had the greatest difficulty in getting from the ice to the land.

The wisest man in the party warned the others to be careful neither to eat nor drink rapidly or immoderately should they shortly obtain food, as the results of any greediness would be more disastrous than those of their recent privations. They had not proceeded very far on land before they saw the tracks of some reindeer. They were fortunate in shooting one of the beasts; his throat was cut, and his blood drunk while it was still warm. All but one of the party exercised a wise restraint, and refrained from indulging too freely in the meat they had captured. The one greedy individual who ate too much paid the usual penalty—he died!

The sea-otter is a native of the shores of the North Pacific Ocean, and lives principally on shell-fish, sea-urchins, and certain kinds of sea-weed. The fur is extremely valuable, and on that account the animals have been hunted to such an extent that the species is almost extinct. The Russian Government now limit the catch on their coasts to fourteen a year. They possess in the neighbourhood of Cape Lopatka the best sea-otter fisheries known.

Every year a party of native hunters starts down the coast in a couple of small boats, so frail that only the most courageous of men dare face the ocean in them. Often the party is never heard of again. At other times they bring back their valuable booty, some ten or twelve skins, half of which they keep, the other half being surrendered to the Russian Government. The skins are worth not less than a hundred pounds each.

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A century and a half ago many Russian hunting expeditions were sent to the sea-otter grounds, and how much destruction they wrought may be gathered from the remark of an old writer concerning one band of hunters. He says: "Their success in hunting was not great, for they caught no more than 1880 full-grown sea-otters, 778 middle-aged, and 372 cubs." If this was the result of an unsuccessful expedition, then a successful one must have been accompanied by almost wholesale slaughter.

In 1762 four vessels sailed to the Fox Islands, of which only one returned to Kamschatka. The first was the *Zacharias and Elizabeth*, under the command of Drusin, and manned by thirty-four Russians and three Kamschatdales. On their way out they called at an island named Attak, where they remained fourteen days, and took on board seven Russians who had been shipwrecked on this coast, one of whom, Korelin, returned to Kamschatka with the account of this voyage.

On their arrival at the Fox Islands they laid up the vessel in a safe harbour, brought their cargo ashore, and prepared to construct a hut. Soon after, two of the natives voluntarily brought hostages, and their example was speedily followed by the inhabitants of the more distant villages. The commander then sent out three hunting-parties, one consisting of eleven men, among whom was Korelin. This was the only party of which any account was received; for not a single person of the other two, or of the crew remaining on board, ever returned to Kamschatka.

One day, most of the members having gone out to examine the traps and pitfalls, and only five men being left behind, the islanders seized the opportunity

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to show how much they resented the presence of the foreigners among them. As two of the Russians were on a visit to the islanders, they suddenly, and without any provocation, struck one of them on the head with a club, and stabbed him with their knives. They next fell upon the other, who defended himself with his hatchet, and, though desperately wounded, forced his way back to his companions. Korelin and Bragin, who were in the hut, seized their fire-arms, and went to the assistance of the fifth, who had been thrown down and stabbed. Korelin wounded two, drove away the others, and brought his companion half-dead to the hut.

Soon afterwards the natives surrounded the hut, which the Russians had taken the precaution to provide with loop-holes. The islanders were too much afraid of the guns to attempt to storm the little fort, but whenever the inmates made their appearance, darts were thrown at them from all sides, so that the prisoners were unable to venture out for water. When the two wounded men had recovered a little, they all sallied out to make an attack on the islanders with their guns and lances. They killed three, wounded several, and drove away the rest. During the siege the savages were observed at a little distance, displaying the limbs and clothes of the six Russians who had been ruthlessly massacred.

When the natives finally disappeared, the four Russians dragged their canoe down to the sea, rowed hurriedly out of the bay, and landed near a small habitation. Finding it empty, they drew the canoe ashore, and made their way across some mountains to a place where one of the other hunting-parties had its headquarters. It was nearly evening when they got

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within sight of the camp. They fired off their guns as a signal, but, getting no reply, they guessed that this company, too, had been butchered by the inhabitants. And this turned out to be the truth. The noise of the fire-arms brought out a numerous body of islanders, who closely pursued them. Night, however, favoured their escape over the sandy shore of a bay, to a rock where they obtained shelter. From behind this barrier they fired at their pursuers, and forced them to retire. As soon as their assailants had withdrawn, they went back towards the haven where the vessel had been left at anchor. They ran without stopping during the whole night, and at break of day, when they were about three miles from the haven, they saw one of the ship's chests lying on the shore. Struck with this alarming discovery, they retreated at once to a neighbouring hill, from the top of which they could survey the whole bay. Arrived at the summit, they saw several natives rowing in canoes, but could not discover a trace of their own ship. During that day, therefore, they concealed themselves, and did not venture again towards the haven till the evening, when they found the vessel smashed to pieces, and the mangled bodies of their companions scattered on the beach. They collected all the provisions that they could carry from those that the islanders had left untouched, and then returned to the mountains.

The following day they scooped out a cavity at the foot of a mountain, about three miles from the haven, and covered it with a piece of sail. In the evening they again explored the wreckage, and discovered an image of a saint, and a prayer-book; but all the fishing-tackle and hunting apparatus had been taken

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away, except a number of leathern sacks, which had been ripped up and thrown away as being of no value. The Russians collected all that remained that was of any use to them, and dragged as much of it as they could to their retreat in the mountains. Here they lived in a very wretched state for nearly two months.

Meanwhile they employed themselves in making a little canoe, which they covered with the old leather sacks. At night they drew it down to the sea, and rowed along the shore in hope of reaching another Russian vessel, which they believed to be anchored off the coast. They kept some distance from the shore, and in that way passed three or four collections of small huts without being discovered. The following day they were seen by a number of natives, who at once posted themselves so as to intercept them.

The savages rowed close to the beach, some remaining in the canoes, and some going ashore. They commenced the assault with a volley of darts, and, notwithstanding that the Russians did great execution with their fire-arms, the skirmish continued the whole day. Towards evening the enemy retired, and the fugitives betook themselves with their canoe to an adjoining cavern. The attack was again renewed during the night, but the Russians repulsed the assailants without much difficulty. In this encounter Bragin was slightly wounded. They remained in the cavern for three days, when they were driven out by a high spring-tide; but they managed to take refuge in another cave close at hand, despite the opposition of the islanders.

They were confined in this second hiding-place for five weeks during which time they kept watch by turns. They seldom ventured twenty yards from the

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entrance, so that the only way they could quench their thirst was by catching the moisture that dripped from the rocky roof above them. Their food consisted of raw shell-fish, but at last this was all exhausted, and they were compelled by extreme want to venture out to sea in their canoe. Fortunately they escaped unperceived.

They continued their progress at night, but hid themselves on the shore by day. By this means they reached the vessel of another hunting-party under the command of Ivan Korovin. Korovin had collected forty-eight dark-coloured foxes, and a hundred and seventeen of the common sort. He had also obtained a number of sea-otter and fox skins by barter, but had been compelled several times to defend his crew and vessel from violent attacks made by bodies of angry natives. His crew had been reduced by sickness, and he welcomed Korelin and his three companions as useful reinforcements.

A month after this, Korovin put out to sea. The vessel was drifted about by contrary winds for two days, and then stranded in a bay on the island of Umnah. The ammunition and sails, together with the skins for the construction of canoes, were taken ashore with great difficulty. During the disembarkation, one sick man was drowned; another died soon after they reached land. The whole number of the Russians now amounted only to sixteen, of whom three were ill with scurvy. They arranged the canoes and some empty barrels as supports, spread a number of seal-skins over them to form a tent, and lay down to sleep, leaving two to keep watch.

Before the day dawned, over a hundred savages advanced secretly, and threw a number of darts with

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such force that many pierced through the canoes and skins, killing the two sentinels on the spot, and wounding the rest. The attack was so sudden that the Russians had no time to hunt for their ammunition and pouches, but sallied forth and attacked the enemy with lances. Two of the savages were killed, and the others driven to flight; but Korovin and his party were so severely wounded that they had scarcely strength to return to their tent.

During the night the storm increased, and dashed the vessel to pieces. The greater part of the wreck was cast on shore and was carried away by the islanders, who, before they departed, broke up the barrels of fat, emptied the provision-sacks, and destroyed most of the furs. When they retired, the Russians collected what the savages had left untouched. The castaways were unmolested for two days, after which a hundred and fifty natives advanced from the eastern part of the island toward the tent. Some of the new-comers possessed fire-arms, but they used them so badly that they did no damage. They certainly set the high grass on fire, and the wind blew the flames towards the tent; but the Russians forced the enemy to retire, and gained a little time in which to extinguish the flames.

This was the last attack. But sickness and misery detained Korovin and his companions at this spot for close upon another three weeks. They then put to sea in a canoe, eight yards long, which they had constructed in order to search for the third vessel, with whose fate they were, so far, unacquainted. Their number was now reduced to twelve, among whom were six Kamschatdales.

After rowing for ten days, they landed on the beach

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of the island on which the ship had gone to pieces ; and there they found the burnt remains of a vessel, and fragments of sails, clothes, and ropes. At a small distance was an empty dwelling, and in a small out-house they found, to their inexpressible horror, twenty strangled corpses, each lying with a thong of leather round his neck. These men they recognised as the crew of the vessel that had been burnt.

Korovin and his companions now began to build a hut, but were prevented from finishing it by the unexpected arrival of Stephen Glottof, a Russian, who came to them with a small party by land. The wanderers now joined Glottof, and rowed the next day to his vessel. In Coxe's *Account of the Russian Discoveries between Asia and America* will be found many similar stories of the dangers encountered amongst the wild tribes of the North Pacific Islands by those who went hunting sea-otters in their neighbourhood.

That the natives on the other side of the Pacific, that is, those who inhabited the western coasts of North America, were no more friendly to those who came to catch or trade in furs than the people on the islands, will be seen from the following story, the authority for which is Washington Irving, and the source, his book on the fur-trade of these regions, entitled *Astoria*.

The Pacific Fur Company sent a ship, under Captain Thorn, to coast along the western shores of North America, and obtain furs from the native hunters. The vessel was well provided with the usual array of mirrors, knives, beads, and cloth, of which the Indians were so fond. The crew consisted of twenty-three white men and an Indian interpreter.

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At Vancouver Island they anchored in the harbour of Newetee, very much against the advice of the interpreter, who warned the captain that the natives of this particular region were of an especially treacherous disposition. Numbers of canoes came off, bringing sea-otter skins for sale, but it was too late in the day to begin trading, and one of the white men, Mr. M'Kay, went ashore for the evening as the guest of the chief, six natives remaining on board as security for his safe return. M'Kay was so well treated on land that he remained ashore all night.

In the morning, before Mr. M'Kay returned to the ship, great numbers of the natives came off in their canoes to trade, led by the two sons of the chief. As they were well laden with otter-skins, and were anxious to begin bartering, the captain did not wait for the return of M'Kay, whose duty it was to manage this part of the business, but spread his blankets, cloths, knives, beads, and fish-hooks temptingly on the deck, expecting that the Indians would buy at *his* prices. But they were not so simple, and they insisted on asking twice as much for every skin as Captain Thorn offered.

Thorn was a plain, straightforward sailor, accustomed to speak his mind, and not to change his opinions. He was not a very patient individual, and he had the most profound contempt for all coloured people. When he found that the natives would not sell their skins at the prices he thought sufficient, he gave up all attempt at bargaining, stuck his hands in his pockets, and walked up and down the deck in a very bad temper. This did not quite suit the Indians, and they began to follow him, holding skins in their hands, and worrying him to trade. Still he took no

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notice. Then they began to taunt him with meanness in trying to buy skins below their full value. This roused the wrath of the captain, and, turning suddenly round, he seized an otter-skin from the hands of the young chief, rubbed it in his face, and kicked him over the side of the boat. Completely losing his temper, he kicked all the skins about the ship, and behaved in a manner worthy neither of his race nor his position. In a few minutes the ship was clear of Indians, all of whom went back home with the deepest resentment burning in their hearts.

When M'Kay came on board the interpreter told him what had happened, and asked him to persuade the captain to leave the place at once, as the Indians would certainly seek revenge for their wrongs. But the captain would not go, and laughingly pointed to his guns and other fire-arms as sufficient protection against any number of naked savages.

At daybreak the next morning, a canoe containing twenty Indians came alongside the ship. They held up otter-skins in their hands, and signified a desire to trade. They were unarmed, appeared quite friendly, and were allowed to come on deck. Presently another canoe arrived—then another; and the Indians were soon clambering into the vessel on all sides. They now offered to trade with the captain on his own terms, and as fast as he could collect the skins, they accepted knives for them, till practically every one of them had been armed.

The ship had, during the whole of this time, been making preparations to depart. The anchor was nearly up, the sails were loose, and the captain gave the order to clear the ship. In an instant a wild war-whoop split the air, knives and war-clubs were

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drawn, and the savages rushed upon the little band of white men. The ship's clerk was leaning with folded arms over a bale of blankets, when a knife was plunged into his back, and he fell dead upon the deck. M'Kay jumped up to defend himself, only to be immediately felled by a blow from a club, and then to be flung into the sea, where the women in the canoes completed the murder.

The captain, who was without any other weapon than a clasp-knife, was personally attacked by the young chief, who wished to wipe out the insult he had received the day before. With a blow of the clasp-knife the captain laid his assailant upon the deck; but he was instantly surrounded, fell with a dozen knife-wounds in his body, and was thrown into the sea.

Throughout the ship there was fighting with knives, handspikes, and anything else which the men could seize at the moment of the surprise; but all the crew upon the quarter-deck were overpowered by force of numbers, and mercilessly slain. Seven men had been sent aloft to make sail, and so far they had been helpless witnesses of the horrible massacre below. They attempted to let themselves down by the rigging, get between decks, and obtain fire-arms. Three fell in the attempt; but four of them got down into the cabin, where they found one of the officers, Mr. Lewis, dangerously wounded. They barricaded the cabin door, broke holes through the companion-way and using the muskets that were now in their possession, they speedily cleared the decks. As the Indians departed in their canoes, the survivors of the crew rushed on deck, aimed the ship's guns at the retreating savages, and did great damage amongst them.

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When night fell, the five men on board discussed their plans for the future. Lewis advised that, short-handed as they were, they should slip the cable and get to sea. The other four declined, as they feared the strong winds then blowing into the mouth of the dangerous harbour where they were anchored. They resolved, therefore, as soon as it was pitch-dark, to put off in the ship's boat, keep close to the shore, and make for the trading settlement of Astoria, whence they had previously set out. Lewis refused to go with them. He declared that he would remain on board, tempt the natives back again, and then fire the magazine and blow the whole lot of them to pieces, as a punishment for their brutality.

When the day dawned, a few canoes came out to reconnoitre. It was known that there were but few men left on board, but it was uncertain what kind of resistance these men might offer if any attempt to capture the ship were made. As no one was to be seen, more canoes were put off, until in time the bay was full of them. At length Lewis arrived on deck, made friendly signs, and invited them on board; but it was some time before any of them ventured to accept the invitation. Those who did so met with no opposition, but Lewis had disappeared into the powder-magazine, and could not be found. More canoes now pressed forward to board the ship; the decks were soon crowded with yelling savages occupied in plundering the vessel. In the middle of their vociferous joy there came one loud clap like the bursting of a mighty thunderbolt, and the ship was blown into the air! The sea was strewn with arms and legs, fragments of wreck, shattered canoes, Indians swimming for their lives and struggling in the agonies of

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death. For days afterwards the shore was littered with the remains of mutilated bodies. The grief of the relatives of the slain was inexpressible, and the air was filled with the lamentations of women bemoaning the loss of sons and husbands.

But their weeping and wailing were suddenly changed to yells of fury at the sight of four unfortunate white men who were being brought to the village in captivity. They were the four who had attempted to escape in the ship's boat. They had been driven ashore, and had taken refuge in a small cove. There they had fallen asleep, and had been surprised and captured by the natives. They were put to death in the slow and painful manner customary among the Indians when they wish to sacrifice to the spirits of the dead the enemies they have captured in their fights.

CHAPTER IX

FARTHEST NORTH

INSIDE the northern edge of the continents of Europe, Asia, and North America, there runs, like a belt, all round the world, an area of cold and barrenness, little frequented by men who shoot and hunt merely for sport, but traversed from time to time by those in search of food or merchandise. To a portion of this area, lying in the extreme north of North America, is applied the name of the Barren Lands. These Barren Lands form a region of the most complete and extended desolation on earth, where no man lives, where the land is swept by violent storms, where scarcely anything grows, and where the only living thing that can resist the ice-laden blasts is the musk-ox. As a rule, the Barren Lands of America are visited only when the rivers are free from ice and the journey can be made by canoe. At other times, the journey, if made at all, must be made on snow-shoes, and ammunition and clothes must be carried on sledges drawn by dogs. At midsummer deer are plentiful for food, and the hunter can carry his goods and provisions in a canoe. But in summer the fur of the musk-ox is in bad condition, and it is only on account of the fur of this creature that men ever wish to visit such an awful region. Wood with which to boil tea and cook food has to be carried. Provisions are not

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usually taken, as there is no room for them on the sledge.

The musk-ox is a curious creature, related both to the sheep and the ox, and is a native of Arctic America. It is about the size of a small Welsh ox, is stoutly built, and has short legs. It is covered with long brown hair that reaches nearly to the ground, and beneath this is a thick layer of under-fur that is shed in summer. Only the hardiest, strongest, and most experienced Indians ever go to the Barren Lands in the winter, and to be a musk-ox hunter is the ambition of all those who think themselves possessed of unusual courage, skill, and endurance.

The first servant of the Hudson Bay Company who ever saw a musk-ox was Samuel Hearne, who was engaged at the time in certain exploration work. He says: "We had not walked above seven or eight miles before we saw three musk-oxen grazing by the side of a small lake. The Indians immediately went in pursuit of them, and as some were expert hunters, they soon killed the whole of them. This was, no doubt, very fortunate; but, to our great mortification, before we could get one of them skinned, such a fall of rain came on as to put it out of our power to make a fire, which, even in the finest weather, could only be made of moss, as we were nearly a hundred miles from any woods. This was poor comfort for people who had not broken their fast for four or five days. Necessity, however, has no law, and having been initiated into the methods of eating raw meat, we were the better prepared for this repast. But this was by no means so well relished, either by me or the Southern Indians, as either raw venison or raw fish had been; for the flesh of the musk-ox is not only coarse and

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tough, but smells and tastes so strong of musk as to make it very disagreeable when raw, though it is tolerable eating when properly cooked. The weather continued so remarkably bad, the heavy rain being accompanied by snow and sleet, and our necessities were so great by the time the weather permitted us to make a fire, that we had nearly eaten to the amount of one buffalo quite raw."

Another passage from the same writer will serve to impress upon us the character of the region of which we are now speaking: "We have many times fasted two whole days and nights; twice upwards of three days, and once . . . near seven days, during which we tasted not a mouthful of anything except a few cranberries, water, scraps of old leather, and burnt bones. On these pressing occasions I have seen the Indians examine their wardrobe, which consisted chiefly of skin-clothing, and consider what part could best be spared; sometimes a piece of an old, half-rotten deer-skin, and at others a pair of old shoes were sacrificed to alleviate extreme hunger."

Caspar Whitney covered two thousand eight hundred miles on snow-shoes, accompanied by a number of Indians, in pursuit of musk-oxen, and his account is nothing but one long story of hardship from hunger and cold.

One day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, he and the Indians dragged themselves wearily to the top of one of the many rocky ridges up and down which they had been moving for days without ever catching a glimpse of a single musk-ox. As they mounted this ridge, one quick, eager glance showed them that there was no animal to be seen in any direction, and

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with a sigh of despair they sat down to draw consolation and nourishment from their pipes.

Suddenly, one keen-eyed Indian jumped to his feet, and then on to the top of a rock, where he stood excitedly pointing to the north-west. In a second every man was on his feet, staring into the horizon in the direction in which the Indian had pointed. Whitney was unable to discover anything, except what seemed to be a vapour coming up out of the rocks four miles away, and which was formed by the mist which arose from a herd of animals. This invariably happens when the mercury is sixty or seventy degrees below zero, and the vapour, on a clear day, can be seen five miles away. A long look through the glasses told the hunter that the "rocks" were animals of some sort. He handed the glasses to one of the Indians, who, as soon as he had focussed them on the vapour, set up a yell, and made a rush for his sledge.

"Instantly there was excitement enough on the top of that ridge to put life into eight hungry men. The Indians for a minute huddled together, chattering, and grinning, and gesticulating, and then each man rushed to his sledge and began slipping his dogs from the harness." Whitney followed suit and also began unhitching his dogs, but their harness had buckles on it, and in the bitter cold these were so difficult to undo that, by the time he was ready to start, all the Indians and dogs were several hundred yards in front of him and going at a great pace. He settled grimly to the business of running, and in a few minutes caught up the Indians, who were now straggling along in single file, with the two fastest runners about half a mile ahead.

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The running over a succession of sharp ridges, completely covered with all shapes and sizes of rocks, and set in snow that was soft and about a foot and a half deep, was hard work. At every step they sank almost up to their knees in the snow, while their shoes jammed in the rocks that lay close together, or caught on those they attempted to clear in their stride. It was a kind of hurdle-racing, with soft stuff to jump from and land on, and obstacles that could not be knocked over if you did not jump high enough. It was exercise that would have tested the stamina of the best-fed, best-conditioned athlete; and its effect on the half-starved hunters was severe. It seemed as if they would never see the musk-oxen. Over ridge after ridge they toiled, and still the little cloud of vapour appeared as far off as when they first observed it. Just as they were working their way up to a rather higher and broader ridge, the dogs began to bark, and they reached the top in time to see a herd of about twenty-five to thirty musk-oxen, just startled into moving along another ridge about a quarter of a mile beyond. Soon the oxen were in full run to the north, along the top of the ridge, galloping like cattle, with their heads carried well out, though not lowered, and going at a surprising pace, and with the greatest ease, over the rocks and snow. Their big bodies, with the long hair hanging down to emphasise the shortness of their legs, gave a curious appearance to the flying herd.

The wind was blowing a gale from the south, and they had hardly reached the top of the ridge on which the musk-ox had been running, when the animals disappeared over the northern end of it. By the time Whitney reached the limit of the ridge the main herd was a mile away to the north, and still going; but

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four had separated from the band, and were running through some hollows that bore almost due east. These four he determined to follow, though to chase them meant separating from the Indians, and probably the loss of his life. On and on he ran, the rocks and the snow whirling round him at such a pace that he could not distinguish where one began and the other ended. He was so giddy and exhausted with cold, hunger, and fatigue, that the great, dull, dead white surface appeared to rise and fall in front of him, and when he tripped over a rock, he thought he had fallen a hundred instead of a few feet, and was taking a hundred years instead of a few seconds to get up again.

Sometimes he had to pull himself up on his feet by the aid of the very rock that had caused the tumble. Once he lost a snow-shoe, and though it was not really a yard away, he began to run towards it under the impression that it was a long distance off. Everything looked as if seen through the wrong end of a telescope. His eyes began to smart, and, for a moment, the fear of snow-blindness took possession of him.

As he reached the bottom of each ridge, he felt as though he could not struggle to the top of it, not even if a thousand musk-oxen should be patiently waiting there to be slain. He was wet with perspiration, and had thrown away his cloak and cartridge-belt, though he had thrust half-a-dozen cartridges into the pockets of his trousers. On he ran in a kind of stupor, until, as he got to the top of a little ridge, he saw two musk-oxen about a hundred yards ahead of him, and running easily, though directly from him. For a moment he recovered his senses, swung his rifle into position, and dropped on his knee to take a steady aim. He rested

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to get breath, and then, taking a quick aim, he pressed the trigger, and the quarry staggered and dropped. And so, after a tramp of nearly twelve hundred miles, a musk-ox had been slain. He left the beast where it had fallen, and went on after others; but as the sun began to set he turned round to go back to the animal, where he supposed the Indians would bring up the sledges and pitch the camp. After walking some time, he realised that he had lost his way. He was now facing the wind, and his soaked shirt were frozen as hard as boards. As luck would have it, he was able to discover and follow his own tracks, and by nine in the evening he had reached the fallen quarry, where he found his tent pitched, and the Indians feasting on raw and half-frozen musk-ox fat.

Gnawing a piece of this fat, and hardly able to crawl with the cold and the fatigue, he followed back his tracks till he found his belt. It was nearly midnight before the last Indians turned up, badly frozen, to report the killing of two more musk-oxen. Then tea was made, for the little fire was never kindled till all were in, because the tea would freeze in a very few minutes after making, and fuel to keep it warm could not be spared. Several of the men were snow-blind, and groaning with pain. The dogs were fighting over the frozen animal that had been slain, and the temperature was sixty degrees below zero. Hunting the musk-ox is not exactly a picnic!

On what we may perhaps take the liberty of calling the Barren Grounds of Siberia, the chief animals hunted are the Polar bear, the Arctic fox, and the reindeer. The conditions of climate and soil are not so severe as those of the district in which the musk-oxen are taken, but they are quite severe enough to test the patience

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and pluck of those whose weary lot is cast amongst them.

Without the reindeer, life would be impossible to many people. Reindeer draw the sledges, and provide food, clothes, and tent-covers. Rude implements are made from the antlers; their bones are soaked in seal-oil and burned as fuel; their sinews are dried and pounded into thread; their marrow and tongue are great delicacies at a meal; the stiff, bristly skin of the legs forms cover for snow-shoes; and almost the only part of the animal that is unused by the Siberian tribes is the milk.

Some members of the Korak tribe have herds of domesticated reindeer containing from eight to twelve thousand animals, the tending of which forms the chief and almost the only occupation of the tribe. These herds have to be watched every night to keep them safe from wolves. When evening falls, a small party of Koraks, armed with spears and knives, go off to the place where the deer have been grazing, build themselves little huts of trailing pine-branches, and squat in them throughout the long, cold hours of the Arctic night, watching for wolves. The worse the weather, the more danger there is that the herd will be attacked.

Kennan says: "Sometimes in the middle of a dark winter's night, when a terrible north-east storm is howling across the steppe in clouds of flying snow, a band of wolves will make a fierce, sudden attack upon a herd of deer, and scatter it to the four winds. This it is the business of the Korak sentinels to prevent. Alone, and almost unsheltered on a great ocean of snow, each man squats down in his frail beehive of a hut, and spends the long winter night watching the

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magnificent aurora which seems to fill the blue vault of heaven with blood, and dye the earth in crimson—listening to the pulsation of the blood in his ears, and the faint, distant howls of his enemies, the wolves. Patiently he endures cold which freezes mercury into solid lumps, and storms which sweep away his frail shelter like chaff in a mist of flying snow. Nothing discourages him ; nothing frightens him into seeking the shelter of the tents. I have seen him watching deer at night, with nose and cheeks frozen so that they mortified and turned black ; and have come upon him on early, cold winter mornings, squatting under three or four bushes, with his face buried in his fur coat as if he were dead.”

In winter the reindeer come to the woods, but they are driven away in early spring by the mosquitoes. When the ice has broken up, the natives wait on the banks of the rivers for the deer to go north again. They watch for days, and light no fires lest the smoke should warn the animals to seek a safer route. The deer come leisurely along, feeding as they go, towards the river bank, where they take to the water and swim across the stream. As soon as they are perceived, the greatest excitement prevails, and preparations are rapidly, but silently, made to spear them. The men put out in frail canoes, armed with their long, light spears, and shoot rapidly across to the opposite bank of the river to await the approach of the deer in the water.

Six expert natives have been known to surround and spear a herd of three hundred deer and not lose one of them. Sometimes, when a very large herd is swimming, quite a crowd of people come out for the fray. Some remain on the rivers in their canoes, while

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others are stationed further downstream, to pick up any carcasses that may float in their direction. All the deer they can pick up they can keep ; those that manage to reach the shore, and die there, are the property of those who spear them. The hunters are so expert that they spear all the fine, fat animals that they want for food, in such a way as to allow them just sufficient time to get on land, while the less valuable animals are killed at once, and allowed to drift away. Occasionally, the deer, when surrounded in this way, show fight, and it is necessary to keep pretty clear of them, lest the light canoes should be speedily smashed or capsized.

It may afford some little variety to our story if, instead of describing in detail some adventure between a human hunter and a reindeer, we relate, on the authority of Captain Hall, an American explorer in Arctic lands, how a dog captured a deer that a man had lost.

The explorer and his party were on the deck of their ship, when the presence of reindeer upon the ice was reported to them. Intense excitement at once prevailed throughout the vessel, and guns were loaded ready for the pursuit, when some one suggested that it would be wiser to let one of the native hunters go alone, as he would be likely to reach the deer without frightening them. The man was given a rifle, and he proceeded cautiously until he was within range, when he fired and missed. The game at once wheeled round and bolted.

Directly the sound of the rifle was heard, the dogs bounded from the ship, and headed by a Greenland dog, named Barbekark, made for the deer. This annoyed the crew very much, for it was thought that

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the dogs would drive the deer away, and that no fresh venison would be obtained. It was useless to attempt to recall the dogs, for they were now in full pursuit, and added to vexation at the loss of fresh meat was the fear that some of the dogs themselves would lose their way and never be seen again.

As the crew watched the chase they noticed that Barbekark was behaving with wonderful sagacity, not pursuing the zigzag course of the reindeer, but keeping a direct line and cutting off corners. The other dogs followed their clever leader, and they were soon close upon the deer. The latter immediately changed their course ; the dogs followed, and so the chase continued for nearly two hours, till at last all the animals were lost to sight.

Just about midday Barbekark was seen returning, his mouth and body all covered with blood. The interpretation put upon this was that he had had a fight with the deer ; but no one dreamed that he had killed one, for the Esquimaux declared that they had never known a dog to be of any use in hunting down deer. But Barbekark refused to be ignored, and several times left the ship and then returned again, as if to ask the sailors to go with him. He whined to attract attention, went first to one man and then to another, jumped about here and there, and ran up and down the gangway steps. In time, the curious actions of the dog led the sceptics to believe that, after all, he might have slain a deer. Accordingly a party of men started off over the ice, following the direction indicated by Barbekark. They followed his tracks first about a mile to the north, and then two miles to the west, where, to their intense surprise, they

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found all the dogs seated on their haunches, with the dead deer in the midst of them.

When the animal was examined, it was seen that its throat had been cut by the teeth of the dog, as effectively as though it had been done with a knife. The windpipe and the jugular vein had been severed, and a small piece of flesh had been bitten out. The moment one of the men approached, Barbekark ran to and fro in great delight, wagging his tail, barking with glee, and showing the sailors not only how clever he had been, but also how good he had been in not taking more than a mouthful of the prize for his own use. The snow round the spot showed that a terrible fight had taken place before the deer had been conquered, and bore testimony to the courage of both of the combatants.

The largest living deer is not the reindeer, but the elk, or moose, as it is often called. This animal is found, however, in the same countries as the reindeer, but not quite so far north; it is a denizen of the forest, and its northern extension is limited by that of the trees. The flesh of the elk forms a valuable addition to the larder, being very palatable, whether fresh, smoked, or salted. The skin is converted to a variety of purposes, and in olden times soldiers' doublets were made of it.

Formerly, when the elk was so plentiful as to be a nuisance, it was taken—but illegally—in a pit of great depth and capacity. Monsieur Falk, who was very much interested in these animals, accidentally met with an elk-pit, and being exceedingly cross that his favourite creatures should be so cruelly treated, caused his servants to throw a huge log to the bottom of the abyss. The owner of the pit-fall came in the early

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morning, long before the sun had risen, to see whether he had had any luck in the night. Peering down into the dark depths of the hole, he saw a large object lying at the bottom, and at once concluded that he had got a fine specimen of an elk. He hastened home to get assistance to secure the prize ; but when he returned some hours later, and discovered that his " elk " was a lump of wood, he was uncommonly wroth, especially as all the people who had come to help him either grumbled at the trouble they had been put to, or laughed at the way he had been tricked.

A more legitimate method of capture was hunting with dogs. And the best hunters were supposed to be fiddlers ; for it was affirmed that if a man took a fiddle, lay in ambush, and played the right tune on the fiddle, the deer, if within hearing, would at once go up to the spot from which the music proceeded, and allow itself to be caught. In the year 1851 a man in northern Sweden nearly lost his life while trying to coax elks with a fiddlestick. He may have been playing a tune to which the elks objected, or murdering one that they liked ; but the fact remains, that on nearing the ambush, they made a furious charge at the unfortunate violinist, and maltreated him to such an extent that he found considerable difficulty in beating a retreat. His wounds were so severe as to confine him to bed for a month afterwards. The fiddler was unarmed ; he had depended on two companions, who were also in ambush close at hand, to shoot the beast as it came to the concert. But the attack was so sudden, and so vicious, that the fiddler had been battered almost out of his wits, and the elks had retreated before his companions could get to his rescue.

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These creatures will fly from hunters as long as they have any reasonable chance of escape, but when the hunter or his dogs are close at hand, they often turn round and make a desperate resistance. Three Swedish hunters pursued a huge male for several days, till, tired out by the length of the chase and the great depth of the snow, the animal betook himself to the firmly frozen surface of a lake. As the ice was only thinly coated with snow, the elk was able to move at his own pace, and so to distance his pursuers. For a long time it doubled backwards and forwards on the lake, seeming to realise that it was safer on ice than on land. The three hunters had only one gun between them, and at the second discharge this burst near the muzzle. At length the men succeeded in driving the animal off the lake into the forest again.

Here they continued the chase, but all at once, and when they were pretty close to the animal, it wheeled round and made a desperate rush at its pursuers. The foremost of these was some distance in front of his comrades, and being on *ski*, was unable to get out of the way of the elk in time, and was at once knocked over. Happily for the hunter, the infuriated animal, owing to wounds and exhaustion, fell at the same time by the side of the prostrate man. As the Swede was not seriously injured, he managed, after a time, to get on his knees, and then, seizing hold of one of the long, pendent ears of the deer with his left hand, and drawing forth his knife with his right, he succeeded, after a desperate struggle, in cutting the throat of his antagonist.

Years ago, when the reindeer was much more common than it is now, the hunters would swoop down from the heights on their long *skis*, outpace the fleet-footed deer, and shoot it as it sank into the snow-drifts.

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The number of stories of the adventures of hunters with Polar bears is legion, but as we have already devoted considerable space to bears in other districts, we shall pass over this one of the farthest north, and conclude this chapter with a story of misadventure amongst a party of hunters whose troubles came upon them in running away from duty. The story was given to Captain Hall by the proprietor of the *Daily News*, St. John's, Newfoundland, who had it from Sullivan, one of the survivors.

Two of the men, Sullivan and Dutton, were members of a whaling party numbering forty all told, and sailing in the *Daniel Webster*. When this ship had been worked through the ice it was anchored in a harbour where several other vessels were also stationed. The crews of the different vessels were allowed to visit one another in their spare time, and the discontented ones used these opportunities for grumbling at their lot and abusing their officers. In particular, the crew of the *Ansell Gibbs* complained of bad treatment aboard, and stated their intention of running away as soon as possible.

On the 4th August 1860, Warren Dutton had a long conversation with the malcontents of the *Ansell Gibbs*, and said that he would leave his vessel as soon as they left theirs, and that he thought that he could persuade one or two of his shipmates to go too. Having laid their plans, Dutton returned to his own ship, and told his shipmate, Sullivan, all that had been arranged. He drew such a fascinating picture of what was likely to ensue, that Sullivan consented to go with him. The two men quietly packed a few necessary articles into a travelling-bag, crept into the hold, filled a small bag with hard bread, and then waited for an opportunity

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to hide it on deck without being seen. When this had been accomplished, they signalled to the men of the *Ansell Gibbs* that all was ready. At night, the men who had originated the plot lowered one of their ship's boats, got into her, and paddled over to pick up Dutton and Sullivan. These two dropped their scanty luggage into the boat, took two guns and a little ammunition, joined their fellow-deserters, and pulled away out of sight.

The whole enterprise was a bold, if unlawful, proceeding, for there was nothing but a boat-compass to steer by, and owing to the manner of their departure, the men had been unable to procure a chart, and possessed very little in the way of supplies.

The seven men who had stolen the boat were depending on Dutton for bread, as he had told them that he had a good chance of getting it out of the hold; whereas the bread on their ship was kept near the cabin. But Dutton had not been very successful, and there was not more than twenty pounds between them. As they saw that this supply would not last very long, they all desired to be put on an allowance of one biscuit each per day. They hoped that by the time it was consumed they would have arrived at some place where assistance would be obtainable. The first three days they made a very good run, and on the fourth they fell in with a barque from the States. They were asked aboard, and treated well, though the captain told them they were very foolish to leave their vessels to undertake so long a trip in so small a boat. He would have taken these men aboard his own vessel, but they would not stay. He gave them a small bag of bread, a piece of salt pork, some ammunition, and a chart.

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That night they found some moss and made a fire, over which they stewed a small duck that they had caught. Two days later they shot a white bear, which they skinned and cooked. They divided their little company into two watches, so that it was not necessary to stop often ; and they kept close to the shore all day long, and only went on land at night. They slept with the boat's sail over them as a covering.

At times they met with very bad weather, the wind being so strong that they were continually in danger of being swamped. Two of them were busy bailing out water all the time, and on one occasion they were, for thirty hours, wet to the skin, and unable to land. By this time all the bear's meat had been eaten, and of the bread only a handful of crumbs was left at the bottom of the bag. A few berries and mushrooms were found, but these did little to appease their hunger, and they suffered severely from cold and wet.

One night two of the party ran away, taking with them everything that was of any use, including the boat's compass, though they were unable to steal the boat. The remaining seven made no attempt to chase the thieves, but made the best of what was left to them. It commenced raining. There was a heavy sea rolling, and they found great difficulty in launching the boat. However, after a hard tug, they succeeded in getting her afloat, pulled out a little distance from the shore, and hoisted the sail ; but the wind blew so strongly that the mast was carried away. They managed to get under shelter, and half-an-hour later Dutton died of starvation.

After a three days' rest they put to sea again, but they were driven back by a strong wind, and forced to remain two days longer in the same inhospitable

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region. Further disasters pursued the runaways during the ensuing days, and at last a hole was stove in the boat while they were asleep on an island.

After a while, having managed to repair the boat, they left the island. They ran in where they fancied the mainland was, and there they left the boat and proceeded on foot, walking very slowly indeed. It took them four days before they discovered they were on another island; and then it took them another four days to get back again to the boat, which they found had been badly damaged since they left her. They tried to get round the island in her, but she sank when they got in. So they tramped across the island once again, with no prospect but the slight chance of being picked up. Failing this, they must remain there till they died.

They ate their boots, belts, sheaths, and also a number of bear-skin and seal-skin articles which they had with them. To add to their misery, it began to rain, and kept on raining for three days, when it began to snow. In this deplorable condition they were picked up by a number of Esquimaux, and taken to a mission station, where they were provided with food and clothes, and finally put in the way of getting home again.

CHAPTER X

TRAPPING ELEPHANTS IN INDIA AND CEYLON

THE elephants of Ceylon, of India, and of Further India are hunted chiefly because of their value as beasts of burden, and as labourers in the teak forests and elsewhere. Hence they must be taken in such a way as not to hurt them or render them useless for the purposes for which they are captured. Shooting is, of course, out of the question, though arms are sometimes necessary in self-defence. We may distinguish three separate methods of taking elephants alive, and comparatively without injury, namely, hunting with trained females, noosing, and driving into *kheddahs* or enclosures.

Robert Knox, writing more than two centuries ago, says : " After discovering the retreat of such as have tusks, unto these they drive some she-elephants, which they bring with them for the purpose, which once the males have got a sight of, they will never leave, but follow them wheresoever they go, and the females are so used to it that they will do whatsoever, either by word or by a beck, their keepers bid them. And so they delude them along through the towns and countries, and through the streets of the city, even to the very gates of the king's palace, where sometimes they seize upon them by snares, and sometimes

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by driving them into a kind of pound, they catch them."

When natives pursue single elephants, they usually avail themselves of females in order to approach the animal they are pursuing, and so get an opportunity of casting a noose over its foot. The professional elephant-catchers of Ceylon are called Panickeas ; they can track elephants in the forest with the instinct of animals, and with a courage equal to their skill.

Major Skinner, formerly Chief Officer at the head of the Commission of Roads in Ceylon, writing to Sir James Emerson Tennent, relates a striking anecdote illustrative of the daring of the Panickeas. "I once saw," he says, "a very beautiful example of the confidence with which these fellows, from their knowledge of the elephants, meet their worst defiance. It was in Neuera-Kalawa ; I was bivouacking on the bank of a river, and had been kept out so late that I did not get back to my tent till between nine and ten o'clock at night. On our return towards it we passed several single elephants making their way to the nearest water, but at length we came upon a large herd which had taken possession of the only road by which we could pass, and which no intimidation would induce to move off. I had some Panickeas with me ; they knew the herd and counselled extreme caution. After trying every device we could think of for a length of time, a little old Moorman of the party came to me and requested we should all retire to a distance. He then took a couple of torches of dried wood, one in each hand, and waving them above his head till they flamed out fiercely, he advanced at a deliberate pace to within a few yards of the elephant who was acting as a leader of the party, and who was growling

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and trumpeting in his rage, and flourished the flaming torches in his face. The effect was instantaneous ; the whole herd dashed away in a panic, bellowing, screaming, and crashing through the underwood while we availed ourselves of the open path to make our way to our tents."

What would have happened had the elephant not been frightened, and not made to run away, would easily make another story. As a rule there is considerable danger in such a proceeding, and it may be laid down as a general maxim that it is unwise to shout at a group of standing elephants in order to turn them. The trick has been tried more than once, and has not seldom ended fatally.

The Panickeas are experts in the art of noosing elephants on foot. Two of them have been known, without any other assistance, to attempt the capture of the most powerful beasts with nothing else but a flexible rope of buffalo hide. If they can get close to the beast, as he rests or moves quickly along, they slip the noose over one of his hind legs. At other times they put one end of the noose on the ground, hide it with roots and leaves, and fasten the other end to a tree. One of them angers the elephant, and entices it to run over the noose, when the other one, who is in a tree, lifts the noose suddenly by means of a cord, and the animal is brought to a standstill.

Two Panickeas once noosed an elephant in open ground where there were no trees. One man ran away towards the nearest grove with the elephant after him. His companion laid hold of the rope as it trailed along the ground, and kept pace with the elephant till he reached a strong tree. With one quick movement he wound the rope round the trunk of the tree, and the

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elephant was stopped. The beast then turned to attack the man who was fastening the rope, but his assistant ceased running, and coming close up to the elephant, but well out of reach of his trunk, made such irritating noises that the beast forthwith forsook the man with the rope, and turned to the one with the voice. While the elephant and his tormentor were busy pulling faces at each other, and making a variety of rude and unpleasant remarks, another noose was thrown round one of the fore-legs, and fastened to a tree. In time, all the four feet were fastened, and the beast carefully secured, and then the work of training began.

The hunters built a shelter over their captive with branches, and made a wigwam and fire for themselves. They remained at the same spot for several days, while they subdued the spirit and calmed the rage of the elephant. They fed him with plantains, gave him fresh water, and treated him with such kindness that in a few weeks he became quite used to them, and allowed them to drive him away to the coast, where he was sold and shipped.

Methods such as we have been describing are only applicable to the capture of single elephants. When whole herds are wanted, different means must be adopted, and greater risks incurred. The methods vary somewhat at different times and in different places, but as they are substantially alike, we shall describe only one of them. The account given here is adapted from the one related by Sir J. Emerson Tennent in his book on Ceylon.

In the first place, a large enclosure called a *kheddah* was erected. It was made of trees about six inches in diameter, and about twelve feet in height. On the

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outside of the uprights, trees were placed lengthwise, and tied to each post by tough creeping plants. These horizontal posts were further supported by trees with forked ends, which slanted downwards and rested in the ground some distance from the fence. The space between the uprights was sufficiently wide to allow the men to pass in and out. The area enclosed was about five hundred feet in length and two hundred and fifty feet in width. At one end an opening was left, fitted with sliding bars so arranged that the entrance to the *kheddah* could be quickly shut. Two lines of strong fencing, carefully concealed in the trees and gradually narrowing till they reached the opening, were erected to prevent the herd, once it had been forced to move towards the enclosure, from turning to right or left.

When the *kheddah* was finished the beaters were arranged so as to drive closer and closer together all the elephants within a given area. They spread themselves over a wide tract of ground many miles in circumference, and observed great caution in all their movements, to avoid frightening the elephants and driving them in a wrong direction. Just enough noise was made to disturb the animals and keep them steadily moving towards the trap. By these means several herds were concentrated in such an area that it was possible to watch them completely, and day by day they were driven nearer and nearer to the end of their liberty. After a time the suspicions of the beasts were aroused, and stronger measures had to be taken to prevent any escape. Fires were kept burning, at intervals of thirty feet, all round the circumference of the area in which the animals were moving. Two to three thousand beaters were employed, and

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pathways were cleared through the jungle, so that the several sections of the besieging army were in communication with each other. The headmen kept up a vigilant supervision of their followers to see that no one neglected his duty. At last the line of beaters had driven the prey so near to the enclosure that the outer limits of the party were in touch with the ends of the wings of the *kheddah*, and the only thing left was to give the signal to make the final drive. This final drive began with the firing of a few blank shots, followed by the rolling, pattering sound of the tom-toms and shouts from the beaters. As soon as the herd had passed any section of the beaters they burst into the most furious yells. The tumult increased as the terrified mob drew near the opening; the crowd swayed first to one side and then to the other, dashing from point to point in a vain endeavour to break the line.

Just as the herd was making a bee-line for the opening, it suddenly wheeled completely round, bolted back into the jungle, and resumed its original position. A wild pig had started out of a cover, terrified the leader, and produced all the mischief. The herd did not disperse so widely as to prevent the hope of again capturing it, but the attempt was deferred till night-fall, when the fires and the torches could be used with greater effect.

“After sunset the scene exhibited was of extraordinary interest; the low fires, which had apparently only smouldered in the sunlight, assumed their ruddy glow amongst the darkness, and threw their tinge over the groups collected round them; while the smoke rose in eddies through the rich foliage of the trees. Not a sound was perceptible beyond the hum

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of an insect. On a sudden the stillness was broken by the roll of a drum, followed by a discharge of musketry. This was the signal for the renewed assault, and the hunters entered the circle with shouts and clamour; dry leaves and sticks were flung upon the watch-fires till they blazed aloft, and formed a line of flame on every side, except in the direction of the corral, which was studiously kept dark; and thither the terrified elephants betook themselves followed by the yells and racket of the pursuers.

"They approached at a rapid pace, trampling down the brushwood and crushing the dry branches. The leader emerged in front of the corral, paused for an instant, stared wildly round, and then rushed head-long through the open gate followed by the rest of the herd.

"As if by magic the entire circuit of the corral, which to this moment had been kept in profound darkness, now blazed with a thousand lights, every hunter, on the instant that the elephants entered, rushing forward to the stockade with a torch kindled at the nearest watch-fire.

"The elephants dashed up to the very extremity of the enclosure, and being brought up by the powerful fence, retreated to regain the gate, but found it closed. Their terror was sublime: they hurried round the corral at a rapid pace, but saw it now girt by fire on every side; they attempted to force the stockade, but were driven back by the guards with spears and flambeaux; and on whichever side they approached they were repulsed with shouts and discharges of musketry. Collecting into one group, they would pause for a moment in apparent bewilderment, then burst off in another direction as if it had suddenly

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occurred to them to try some point which they had before overlooked ; but again baffled, they slowly returned to their resting-place in the centre of the corral."

After a time the elephants began to realise that they were effectually cornered. They gradually ceased to rush wildly from side to side, though every now and then one would start from the group and try to discover a means of escape. When they were all thoroughly weary with their exertions and stupefied by their fears, they collected at the centre of the *kheddah* in a single group, with the young ones arranged in the centre.

All night the men kept watch outside and saw that a ring of fire surrounded the captives. When they had finished their morning meal and the preparations for the day were completed, the entrance to the enclosure was unfastened, and a number of tame hunting elephants with their drivers were introduced. Each of the tame animals had a rider, or mahout, and an attendant with a noose formed of cords of elk hide. Along with them, and hidden behind them, came the noosers, each one eager for the honour of taking the first elephant. The headman of the party was a wiry little man, nearly seventy years old, who was renowned for his courage and dexterity. He was accompanied by his son, also a noted elephant trapper.

The chief of the tame elephants was one called Siribeddi. She was about fifty years old, and was distinguished for her gentleness and quiet temper. She was a most accomplished decoy, and evidently fond of the sport. She entered the corral noiselessly, and moved along slyly and indifferently as if not in the least interested in the proceedings. She sauntered

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leisurely along in the direction of the captives, stopping now and then to pluck a little grass or a few leaves as if she were taking her daily ramble. As she approached the herd they set out to meet her, thinking her to be a newly-arrived friend. The leader of the captive host greeted her by passing his trunk over her head and stroking her gently a few times. Then he returned with her towards his comrades in distress, as if to introduce the new arrival. Siribeddi followed him in the same careless fashion, and drew herself close up behind him, thus affording the nooser an opportunity to stoop under her and slip the noose over the hind foot of the wild one. The latter at once saw his danger, and in a moment turned to attack the man, who would have suffered severely for his daring had not Siribeddi protected him by raising her trunk and driving the assailant back into the middle of the herd. The old man was, nevertheless, slightly wounded, and was drawn out of the corral, whereupon his son Ranghanie took his place.

The herd again collected at the centre with their heads together. The largest one was singled out, and then two tame ones pushed their way into the crowd and stood one on each side of him. He made no resistance, but he showed by his uneasy movements that he was more than a little suspicious. Ranghanie came quietly along, holding in one hand a noose, one end of which was fastened to a collar round Siribeddi's neck. Under the shelter of the tame elephants, he crept up to the one that it was desired to catch, and slipped the noose over its foot as it lifted it up and down in its fear. The two tame elephants at once fell back, Siribeddi stretched the noose to its full length, and as she dragged the captive out of the

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crowd another of the tame elephants placed himself between her and the herd to prevent any interference.

In order to secure the beast to a tree, it was necessary to draw him back about thirty yards. He made a furious resistance, bellowing in terror, plunging on all sides, and crushing the smaller timber which bent like reeds beneath his clumsy struggles. "Siribeddi drew him steadily towards her, and wound the rope round the proper tree, holding it all the time at full tension, and stepping cautiously across it when, in order to give it a second turn, it was necessary to pass between the tree and the elephant. With a coil round the stem, however, it was beyond her power to haul the prisoner close up, which was, nevertheless, necessary in order to make him perfectly fast; but the second tame one, perceiving the difficulty, returned from the herd, confronted the struggling prisoner, pushed him shoulder to shoulder, and head to head, and forced him backwards, whilst at every step Siribeddi hauled in the slack rope till she brought him fairly up to the foot of the tree, where he was made fast by the attendants. A second noose was then passed over the other hind-leg, and secured like the first, both legs being afterwards hobbled together by ropes made from the fibre of the jaggery palm.

"The two decoys then ranged themselves, as before, abreast of the prisoner on either side, thus enabling Ranghanie to stoop under them and noose the two fore-feet as he had already done the hind ones, and these ropes being made fast to a tree in front, the capture was complete, and the tame elephants and keepers withdrew to repeat the operations on another of the herd. As long as the tame elephants stood beside him, the poor animal remained comparatively

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calm and almost passive under his sufferings, but the moment they moved off, and he was utterly alone, he made the most surprising efforts to set himself free and rejoin his companions. He felt the ropes with his trunk and tried to untie the numerous knots; he drew backwards to liberate his fore-legs, then leaned forward to extricate his hind ones, till every branch of the tall tree vibrated with his struggles. He screamed in his anguish, with his trunk raised high in the air, then falling on his side he laid his head on the ground, first his cheek and then his brow, and pressed down his doubled-in trunk as though he would force it into the earth; then suddenly rising, balanced himself on his forehead and his fore-legs, holding his hind-feet fairly off the ground. This scene of distress continued for some hours, with occasional pauses of apparent stupor, after which the struggle was from time to time renewed abruptly, and as if by some sudden impulse, but at last the vain strife subsided, and the poor animal stood perfectly motionless, the image of exhaustion and despair."

By this time the rest of the herd were thoroughly frightened and had lost all their pluck. A few vain attempts were made to storm the stockade, but for the most part they stood silent and dismayed, wondering what was going to happen to them next. One after another the chosen ones were snared after the same fashion that we have already described. The tame ones forced themselves in amongst the wild ones, one on either side of the selected victim, and then under cover of the wily, deceitful Siribeddi the man with the noose crept up and fastened one leg, after which the energetic decoy would haul the wild brother up to a tree to be made fast with the ropes and cords.

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It is curious that on all these occasions no attempt was made by any wild elephant to attack the mahouts on the tame ones. The men rode in and out quite fearlessly amongst the infuriated or panic-stricken herd, but never was there the slightest attempt on the part of the trapped animals to take any revenge.

The various members of the herd behaved in as many different ways as a crowd of human captives might have done under similar circumstances. Some took their captivity calmly ; others raged and tore up anything within reach. Some struggled without any noise ; others bellowed like a storm. Some lay motionless on the ground ; others sobbed as if they were in pain. Nearly all of them, mild and furious alike, beat up the ground in front of them with the fore-feet and flung the dry earth over every part of the body, taking as it were an earth bath.

During the whole of the operations the most noticeable and the most interesting thing was the behaviour of the tame elephants. They always knew exactly what they were expected to do, and exactly how to do it. They thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and while showing no ill-humour or spite towards their wild relatives from the forest, they also showed no mercy when they thought it necessary to be severe. They were as cautious as skilful, and never hurried, got confused, or tangled up the ropes. If in the course of their work they had to pass over a fallen captive, they always trod circumspectly and never trampled on him. At times they saw an unexpected danger, and themselves took steps to remove it. On one occasion one of the larger elephants contrived, before he could be hauled up to the tree, to walk once or twice round it, carrying the rope with him. The decoy, seeing that

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in this way he was gaining an advantage over the nooser, calmly walked up to him of her own accord and made him unwind himself, after which the rope was made fast after the orthodox manner. "More than once, when a wild one was extending his trunk, and would have intercepted the rope about to be placed over his leg, Siribeddi, by a sudden motion of her own trunk, pushed his aside and prevented him; and on one occasion, when successive attempts had failed to put the noose over the leg of an elephant which was already secured by one foot, but which wisely put the other to the ground as often as it was attempted to pass the noose under it, the decoy would watch her opportunity, and when his foot was again raised, suddenly push in her own leg beneath it, and hold it up till the noose was attached and drawn tight.

"One could almost fancy that there was a display of dry humour in the manner in which the decoys thus played with the fears of the wild herd, and made light of their resistance. When reluctant they shoved them forward, when violent drove them back; when the wild ones threw themselves down, the tame ones butted them with head and shoulders, and forced them up again. And when it was necessary to keep them down, they knelt upon them, and prevented them from rising, till the ropes were secured.

"At every moment of leisure they fanned themselves with a bunch of leaves, and the graceful way in which an elephant uses his trunk on such occasions is very striking. They too indulged themselves in the luxury of dusting themselves with sand, by flinging it from their trunks; but it was a curious instance of their delicate sagacity, that so long as the mahout was on their necks, they confined themselves to fling-

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ing it along their sides and stomach, as if aware that to throw it over their heads and backs would cause annoyance to their riders."

Sometimes rather pathetic incidents were witnessed. One of the elephants singled out by the noosers had her young one with her. As she was dragged along by the decoys, the baby trotted along by her side until she was securely fastened. At first the men were amused at the affectionate way in which the young one stuck to her mother, but presently they found her quite a nuisance, for the youngster insisted on preventing them from putting the noose over the free foot of the parent. It ran between the men and its mother, tried to lay hold of the rope, pushed the noosers with its head, and struck at them with its trunk. At last they were forced to drive it back to the herd. At every step it took it turned round to look at the captive mother, but, when it got back to the crowd in the middle of the *kheddah*, it went up to the biggest female it could find and got in front of it, close to its legs. The big lady seemed quite to understand the grief of the orphan, and caressed it repeatedly with its trunk, like a mother stroking the hair of her little one. As soon as the noosers had finished the work of tying up the parent and had left her, the infant ran back again and threatened every one who passed. In fact, she gave so much trouble that it was found necessary to noose her too, and tie her up to a tree, in order to get her out of the way. Here she roared and cried with grief and anger, but even in the middle of her deepest distress she would stop for a moment to pick up any sugar-cane or other dainty that might be thrown to her, and then eat and cry at the same time, performing both operations with equal energy.

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Amongst the last of the elephants noosed was one known as the "rogue." He was far more savage than the others, but they would not allow him to take any part in the rushes that they made at the fences. If at any time he attempted to join them, they pushed him out of the way, and would have nothing to do with him. When he was dragged past one of his unfortunate companions who was lying exhausted on the ground, he flew upon him and tried to fasten his teeth in his companion's head. When he was tied up he was at first very violent and noisy, but he soon lay down peacefully and gave no more trouble. Seeing this, the hunters foretold that he was about to die. For about twelve hours he lay, throwing dust over himself as the others had done, but after that time he lay perfectly still, and life passed so quietly away that the men were only aware that he was dead by the crowd of black flies that immediately gathered round his corpse.

Such a scene as we have been describing was repeated for two or three days in succession, every day producing new instances of the agility and cunning of the decoys. When as many elephants had been taken as were required, the last operation of all had to be accomplished. The ropes were slackened, and every captive was marched down to the river between two tame ones. Each of the three elephants had a strong collar of coco-nut rope round his neck, and when the three collars were fastened together the prisoner was safe between his two guards.

"During this operation, it was curious to see how the tame elephant, from time to time, used its trunk to shield the arm of its rider, and ward off the trunk of the prisoner, who resisted the placing the rope round

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his own neck. This being done, the nooses were removed from its feet, and he was marched off to the river, in which he was allowed to bathe ; a privilege of which all eagerly availed themselves. Each was then made fast to a tree in the forest, and keepers being assigned to him, with a retinue of leaf-cutters, he was plentifully supplied with his favourite food, and left to the care and tuition of his new masters."

CHAPTER XI

BEASTS FOR THE CIRCUS AND THE ZOO

I SUPPOSE if any boy were asked to guess how many circuses there were, he would probably reply, "Hundreds." Now, as a matter of fact, there are only five really great circuses, and only about one hundred and fifty important zoological gardens, in the whole world. There are several small menageries and travelling shows, but they contain few animals, and are not of much importance.

Practically speaking, the man who controls almost the whole of the present trade in wild animals is Hagenbeck of Hamburg, and his recent book on *Beasts and Men* is a fascinating story of how animals for zoos and circuses are caught, transported, fed, and trained. Although so many books have been written about adventures encountered in the pursuit of game for sport, and so many stories related of the exploits of those in pursuit of game for profit, it is said that there is no book at all dealing with this especially dangerous occupation of taking the great wild beasts alive. It is just because the animals must be brought to the circus or the zoo in a healthy condition that the profession of a trapper of this description is such a dangerous one. The man who goes out to kill lions as a sport has a much less fatiguing and much less exciting

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routine to follow than the one whose business it is to take these animals alive and bring them, say, from the interior of Africa to the Hippodrome in London.

Fortunately, in addition to Hagenbeck's book, we have been given in *Fry's Magazine* an account of "Trapping Big Game in the Heart of Africa," by Captain Fritz Duquesne; and it is to these two writers that we are indebted for the information contained in this chapter.

The trapper goes out into the wild parts of Africa with an equipment that costs nearly a thousand pounds, and which includes not only rifles and ammunition, but medicine, food, ropes, nets, picks and shovels for digging pits, tanks for water, carpenters' and blacksmiths' tools, and a host of other necessities. The party often contains two hundred men, all of whom have to be paid and fed.

Some of these trappers have become quite famous men, well known both in Europe and in the lands in which they have hunted and worked. There was Cassanova, for instance, who once arrived in Suez with a whole menagerie of live beasts. Hagenbeck and his youngest brother went to meet the traveller and take possession. When they got to the station at Suez, they were greeted by some of the new arrivals, who were in another train in the same station, and who were poking their heads out of the windows, wondering where on earth they had got to. At the hotel, "elephants, giraffes, antelopes, and buffaloes were tethered to the palms; sixteen great ostriches were strolling about loose, and in addition there were no fewer than sixty large cages containing a rhinoceros, lions, panthers, cheetahs, hyænas, civets, caracals, monkeys, and many kinds of birds." The story of how Hagenbeck

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took all these animals up the Adriatic to Trieste, and thence across the Continent *viâ* Vienna, Dresden, and Berlin, to Hamburg, is most interesting reading, but does not belong to our story of the trappers.

Then there was Menges, a regular vagabond and wanderer upon the face of the earth, who could tell no man where he was born, belonged to no nationality, spoke the language of every tribe with whom he came in contact, never used bad language, fought with about as much excitement as we should eat, and was so polite that he was never known to be rude to any one, either friend nor foe.

Such men were brave and skilful, and many were their deeds of daring, but the business was, at most times, a revoltingly cruel one, and not more than one out of five of the animals that were captured ever reached the coast alive; for the beasts, maddened by fear, would fight and struggle till they died of sheer exhaustion. Then it occurred to a Transvaal physician, Koos Marais, who had given up waiting for patients and had taken to trapping animals, that if they were injected with morphine at the moment of capture, their nerves would be quietened, their intense fear calmed, and much loss of life and temper might be prevented. The result has been that nine out of ten of his captures survive and become comparatively happy. One of the first beasts on which he tried the injection was the lion. An expedition made its way into the heart of the country, and there prepared a pit for the beasts for which it was searching. A net was spread over the pit, and this was concealed with a covering of palm leaves and grass.

The next business was to lure the lion into the trap. For this purpose a young goat was tied down at the

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edge of the net, between it and some water where the wild animals came down to drink. The cry of the kid was expected to entice the lion towards the snare, and as a lion will not wet himself if he can help it, he would fall into the trap as he made his way towards the goat.

"At sunset," says Duquesne, "we had finished our preparations, the tethered kid was crying lustily, and we took up our positions in the tree-tops. In this way we were above the scenting range of the lion, but near enough to get an indistinct view of the trap. . . . For two hours we sat silently in the tree-tops, while lizards and other slimy things crawled over us in the darkness. All at once the fireflies put out their lights, and we knew that some intruder was prowling in their haunts. The pained cry of the kid ceased for a moment. There was silence. Even the insects seemed to stop their humming. We focussed our eyes on the trap. A mysterious black body moved in the leaves below. Our hearts seemed to thunder in their beating as we held our breath in the silence. Suddenly a huge body shot into the air like a rocket and descended with a terrific roar. There was a sudden twang of cords, a breaking of earth and snapping of wood. For a moment the bumping thuds against the pit-sides told us of a struggle, and then a wild wailing roar shot from the hole, so intense that the very earth seemed to tremble. From the hollow distance we heard an answer.

"We knew our game was caught, for it had called for help. With breathless haste we descended from the trees. Torches were lighted, and the natives, like a lot of wild fiends, came tearing their way through the forest. We surrounded the pit. A huge lion,

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completely entangled in the net, was at the bottom, as was also the dead body of the kid. Blood was streaming from the lion's lips where he had torn them in his fight against the sides of the pit, and his eyes blazed with fury. He tried to stand and defend himself.

"Finding himself helpless, he gave a mighty roar, and commenced to chew the ensnaring ropes. The natives caught the draw-ropes, drew the struggling monster from the pit, and tied him flat to pegs in the ground. Marais stepped up and quickly thrust the end of the hypodermic syringe into the beast's body. A few seconds later the morphine commenced to act, and the monarch of the forest, with a low groan, sank into unconsciousness as the wondering natives looked on and marvelled at the white man's magic."

We borrow one more story from Duquesne.

At sunset one day he saw a rhinoceros and its young one crossing the broad veldt about three miles away. He climbed the nearest tree, and, using his powerful glasses, saw that the two animals were making their way to a water-hole. He signalled to his native attendants, and they closed round the rhinoceros in a ragged circle about two miles in diameter. The track to the water was well worn, and a pit was dug in which it was hoped to capture the mother.

"The natives with their appliances hid in the bush, and I took a position in a tree. The chief appliance in the capture of the rhinoceros in this instance was of my invention, and known as the 'Duquesne net.' . . . The net does not hold the animal a close captive, but leaves it free enough to struggle around and exhaust itself, which it will do in two hours.

"Just after sunset, in the blue haze of the tropical twilight, the rhino and its calf turned up in the dis-

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tance. Slowly they made their way to the water, the young one lingering in the rear.

"Suspecting no danger, the mother walked down the spoor. She trod on the roof of our pit, and down she went, with a roar like thunder, making a complete somersault. The calf, in its fright at the strangeness of the occurrence, turned and galloped off, squealing like a young pig. The hunters never moved. After the calf had gone a quarter of a mile, it stopped and commenced looking for its mother. Not seeing her, it raised its head and sniffed the air to get her scent. It then returned with slow and cautious steps towards the pit, making a peculiar whining sound.

"Reaching the side of the pit and looking in, the calf then started walking around it, thinking out, no doubt, in its dull little brain, a way to reach its mother. In the meantime the Kaffirs had closed in, the net-bearers making a sort of triangle in the circle. The calf saw its enemies, and then there was real danger. The men with the nets, which were huge and loosely woven of stout beeswaxed ropes, took up positions in the places where the rhino was most likely to try to make its escape. The net-men have the most dangerous part of the hunt in their hands, for they must encourage the animal to charge while they stand holding out the heavy leaded contrivance. The animal in its blind fury will rush right into it. The net-men, if they are lucky, step aside as the animal becomes entangled. Often they are swept from their feet and more or less injured, if not killed.

"In this instance, although the hunt was successful, it did not pass without tragedy. One of the inexperienced natives, thinking that the animal would get out at the rear end of the net, picked up the anchor

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and hurled it over its back, thinking to tighten the ropes. Instead of doing that, he really opened the net. I grabbed the anchor and threw it back, just catching the enraged brute's head. It made a rush for the nearest native, and hurled him into the air. The poor fellow fell at the beast's feet unconscious. I rushed to save him from another charge, and as I did so my foot caught in the mesh of the net and I fell beside the Kaffir. The rhinoceros charged and nearly caught me on its horn. My gun-bearer covered the animal with a rifle in order to shoot it in case my life was endangered. An instant later I was caught by the feet and drawn backwards out of the way as the net-men cast their rope once more over the prey.

"The Kaffir who pulled me out of danger was so careless of his own safety that he became caught in the net. The unfortunate native and the crazed rhino were instantly entangled together. The Kaffir caught the rhino by the ear and the horn as it tried to make a charge. Down they both went, the native and the animal rolling in the unequal struggle. Seizing my Luger pistol, I fired a glancing shot at the animal, and it fell, stunned. We opened the net and took out the unconscious Kaffir. Despite every effort I could make to save his life, he died within an hour.

"When the rhino recovered from the stunning effect of the shot, it found its feet were chained together, and it was hopelessly a prisoner. We made an effort to get its mother out of the pit too, to no avail. We were forced to kill her."

Perhaps, some day, Captain Duquesne will write a book, and not merely a magazine article, full of these exciting stories.

Hagenbeck says that some of the most arduous and

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most expensive expeditions were those he sent to Mongolia and Siberia, and he gives a very lengthy but interesting description of the exploits of one of his hunters, Wilhelm Grieger, who went to Mongolia to bring home some specimens of the wild horse. There was only one man in Europe who knew much about the home and habits of this creature, and to him Grieger accordingly went. But the naturalist was reluctant to give away any information, and Grieger had to try all kinds of dodges to get what he wanted. At last he discovered that he would have to go to a town called Kobdo, situated under the northern slopes of the Altai Mountains. But before he could set out he had to provide himself with silver coins, which were huge, flat pieces weighing about twelve pounds each. Other kinds of money in use where he was going were tea, and coloured woollen bands.

The first part of the journey was made by the Siberian Railway. Thence the traveller proceeded about one hundred and seventy miles by sledge. This was followed by a ride of six hundred miles on horses or camels through deep snow, and in weather so cold that the thermometer registered eighty-two degrees of frost, and the "fifty cases of sterilised milk which had been taken as food for the captured animals froze hard."

In due time Grieger arrived at Kobdo and took up his lodging in a tent. The cold was so severe that he could not keep warm even under a heap of blankets and furs. Often he had no fire for lack of fuel. His chief drink was a mixture of tea, salt, and rancid butter, the favourite beverage of the district.

With the spring, things improved; the rivers were

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opened, and an abundance of trout could easily be obtained. During a rather lengthy stay at Kobdo, Grieger cultivated the friendship of the chiefs, and with their assistance got together a hunting-party. As will be easily understood by those who have read the earlier chapters of this book, the natives of Siberia thought that it was an exceedingly funny thing to go out for the purpose of taking animals alive.

The actual capture of the wild foals was easy enough. A herd of wild horse was chased relentlessly by the natives, who were mounted on their swiftest steeds. After a time the foals were quite worn out and unable to proceed any further, and they were simply led back to the camp with nooses round their necks. In fact, the business was such an easy one that soon the Mongolians had no fewer than thirty foals in camp. This was rather embarrassing to Grieger, who had been sent all this distance to obtain six. The nearest telegraph-office was five hundred miles away, but off he went in order to wire home and ask whether he should bring the whole lot with him or not.

The answer came back "Yes," but by the time he got back to camp the number had increased to fifty-two. "With these the long journey home was commenced, the party consisting not only of the wild foals, but also of . . . animals carrying the travellers and their baggage and thirty native servants. Slowly the caravan wound its way over hill and dale, in rain and sunshine, in heat and cold. Anxiety for the safety of the captives was never absent. Many of them, as was inevitable, died on the journey, in spite of all the care that could be exercised. And in other ways the journey was decidedly eventful.

"Before many days were passed the first incident

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occurred, namely, the escape of the camels, owing to the carelessness of the attendants ; and it was only with the greatest trouble that their recapture could be effected. The attendants turned out to be a bad set ; for after a few weeks Grieger noticed that they were becoming discontented. At last a deputation approached him and announced the intention of the entire company to throw up the work and abandon the caravan, saying that the road was too long, the journey too difficult, and making any other excuses. The money, paid them in advance, they would as conscientious men return. In vain did the traveller use all the arts of persuasion to induce the people to remain. In vain did he point out to them that the caravan would be totally lost if they were to desert him at this moment. At last the leaders of the mutiny professed themselves ready to remain if a rise in salary were granted them. As soon as Grieger discovered that the whole affair was merely a vulgar attempt at extortion, he changed his tactics. Seizing a Kirghiz whip, he promptly proceeded to blows instead of coin ! This treatment was immediately successful ; the mutiny calmed down, the ringleaders begged for pardon, and before long the caravan was jogging merrily along again, without the desertion of a single man. In all, the transportation to Hamburg took eleven months. Out of the fifty-two wild horses which had started, twenty-eight arrived safely at their journey's end, when they were henceforth placed upon a diet of hulled oats, warm bran, and carrots. Thus ends the story of how wild horses first came to Northern Europe."

CHAPTER XII

HERE AND THERE IN INDIA

THE number of different kinds of wild animal in India is very large, and few of them, except the elephant, are of much use to man. Tiger-skins certainly make very handsome rugs, and the outer covering of a crocodile can be converted into a useful kind of leather. But, on the whole, it may be said that the men who hunt and trap the wild beasts of India do so, not so much for direct profit, as to protect their own lives and those of their cattle.

Some of the tribes have, for generations, applied themselves to hunting, their only arms being spears and nets. In the south-east corner of Mysore lives a certain race of men whose hunting excursions are conducted according to fixed rules handed down from father to son for hundreds of years. Each house must furnish the tribe with one hunter, and provide him with a net and spear for the pursuit of the larger animals such as tigers and panthers, and a net and cudgel for smaller creatures like hares. The nets used in the two cases differ, as one might well expect, in size and strength, but both are home-made and are of home-grown material. The larger nets are of rope about as thick as a finger, while the smaller ones are of twine. Bear and tiger nets are forty feet long by twelve feet broad, and the mesh is large enough to allow a man to put his head through. The small

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game nets are more than four times as long as these, but only about four feet deep, and the mesh is just large enough to admit a small fist.

Whatever kind of animal is hunted, the method adopted is much the same. From fifty to a hundred nets are supported on light upright poles across the line of country which the game, when driven, is expected to follow. A few men take up positions in hiding behind the nets, and the others "drive the jungle." The frightened beasts rush heedlessly forward, entangle their heads in the meshes, and so upset the props and entangle themselves in the snares prepared for them.

While they are struggling to escape, spears are vigorously used, and soon every single creature within the trap is killed. It sometimes happens that very powerful animals like tigers and bears bite the rope, make a big hole, and escape. In districts where this method of hunting is frequently practised, the beasts grow wily, and, instead of dashing thoughtlessly forward, turn round and bolt through the line of beaters in the opposite direction; or they wait till one of their number has knocked down the net at one point, when they spring through the gap thus made, and so get away.

Instead of driving the jungle, the natives occasionally track the panthers, bears, and other large animals to their lairs. As the beasts lie asleep during the heat of the day, the nets are drawn carefully round them some distance away. Then, in the cool of the evening, when the hungry creatures go forth to seek their prey, they precipitate themselves against the entanglements, and are killed while seeking a means of exit.

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Sanderson, one of the most expert of hunters, as he was one of the most delightful of writers, tells how he and a friend once had a very narrow escape from a wounded tigress which had been netted in this manner, and at which they had fired as she bounded across the line cleared through the enclosure. The animal hid herself and refused to be dislodged by fireworks, sticks, or stones ; so the only thing left was to go inside and look for her. As there were no elephants available, the men went in on foot—not, however, without taking certain precautions. In front of them was a long net, supported by uprights and borne by natives. Behind this net was a number of men who thrust spears through the holes, or busied themselves by mowing down the jungle with long-handled choppers. The idea was that, if the tigress showed herself, she would be received upon the points of the spears, and at the mouths of the rifles.

The natives were somewhat reluctant to undertake the task assigned to them ; but Sanderson and his friend regarded this as pure timidity which would vanish before a proper example of pluck, and this they proposed to furnish themselves. They selected a point of entry into the enclosure where there was a clear space of about six feet in width between the jungle and the nets, and entered, followed by three gun-bearers and a few volunteers.

Not far from this point there was a pile of bushes which had been built by the spear-men the evening before as a shelter for themselves while they were setting up the encircling net, and beyond this was the thick jungle where the tigress had taken refuge. As they approached this slender barricade, one of the followers poked his spear into it to make a gap. He

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drew it out again with more haste than he had thrust it in, for he had touched the animal of which they were in search, and she sprang upon her hind legs, roaring with anger and pain. Only the upper part of her body could be seen as she pawed the air in front of her. Both the white men fired at the same time, striking her in the chest. Much to their relief, they saw her disappear behind the bushes as she sank, wounded, to the ground.

Prudence suggested a retreat, and the hunters adopted the suggestion. From the outside of the enclosure they could just see their victim, lying apparently dead; but, in order to make sure, they presented her with another couple of bullets before going near enough to examine the result. They found that one bullet had entered the centre of the chest and had come out by the side of the spine, and that the other had gone clean through the right shoulder. The hair on the chest was singed, showing that the tigress must have been quite close to the muzzles of the rifles when the first shots were fired.

At another time, some villagers informed Sanderson that there were two panthers hiding in a strip of jungle on the border of a certain channel. The brutes had killed most of the dogs for miles round, and had worked considerable havoc among the sheep, goats, and cattle. To destroy such terrible nuisances was at once both a duty and a pleasure, and Sanderson set about it in his usual methodical fashion. He collected a hundred beaters, most of whom were armed with rusty old spears and a large number of nets.

The cover in which the panthers were hidden was a strip of bush-jungle about half a mile long and a quarter of a mile broad. On one side of it ran a

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stream ; on the other three sides was open ground. Near the middle it narrowed very much, forming a kind of neck or isthmus between two larger portions. Across this neck the nets were stretched, and the hunter took up his stand in a thick bush facing the passage. On three sides he was completely shut in by the bushes, but in front of him the shrub had been cut down breast-high, and behind this he knelt to shoot. He was in such a position that he could see the beasts if they attempted to cross the open space, and would be able to get a decent aim, as their motion would be impeded by the nets.

The cover was not very dense, for the hot winds and scorching sun of March had robbed most of the bushes of their leaves. There were, however, a few evergreen thickets, in which the panthers were in the habit of resting during the most sultry hours of the day. The less likely half of the cover was beaten first, Sanderson lying in wait all the time, with three guns and one trustworthy attendant. Nothing was found, and it then became pretty certain that the beasts must be in the other and denser half. The beaters, feeling that at last they were likely to be rid of the terrible pests, went to work with a will, and before long they were heard shouting, " There they go ! there they go ! " The panthers had been thoroughly frightened, and, as the cover was thin, had given up their usual sneaking dodges, and come galloping along like a couple of dogs. Sanderson was unable to see them, but he could distinctly hear them making their way rapidly towards the narrow neck where the nets were stretched. Unfortunately, the beaters lagged behind, and gave the beasts time to take breath, so that, instead of crossing the open space, they sprang

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right out into the very bushes where the hunter was hidden, and only a couple of yards away from him. He expected every moment that they would leap upon him, but they detected his presence, and, fearing danger, sprang away towards the nets.

Out jumped Sanderson like a shot. After them he ran without a moment's hesitation. In a dozen yards or so from his ambush he saw one of the beasts hesitating at, and baffled by, the nets. Bang went both barrels! One panther charged the nets and knocked them down, but fell wounded! The other went through the gap like a flash of lightning, and disappeared before there was time for another shot! The first panther was brained and dragged into the shade; the second got clear away, but was never known to haunt that particular piece of cover any more.

Nets are also used in some parts of Ceylon for catching crocodiles. The crocodile is neither very active nor very brave, and the natives go down into the water where they abound, and drag them to the bank by means of their nets. Major Forbes says that fishing for crocodiles in this way is a "curious and interesting sight." "But," continues he, "it was not without considerable surprise and anxiety that I witnessed it for the first time. We had noticed the heads and backs of several crocodiles, and immediately after, the net being arranged, we perceived the crocodile-hunters, seven or eight Moormen, wade up to their necks in the water, and form a semicircular line around the spot where the animals had last been observed; for, on seeing the usual bustle of preparation for their capture, they had gradually lowered their heads beneath the surface. The people employed

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in dragging the net moved their legs rapidly, and others who accompanied them kept striking on the surface of the water with poles; they proceeded in this way, gradually contracting the space within the net, until they brought three crocodiles to the shore at the place where we, armed with spears and guns, were waiting to commence the work of destruction.

“The most vulnerable place in which to strike a crocodile with a spear is that part of the body which is left exposed when the creature moves its fore-legs; and for this, and every other kind of attack, the spear should be so formed as to admit of its being easily withdrawn, that you may strike a more deadly blow if the first should prove ineffectual. The persons employed in dragging (although inside the net), or in beating up the game, did not exhibit any symptoms of alarm, nor did much exertion appear requisite to get out of the way when the crocodiles bestirred themselves and attempted to regain deep cover; this they seemed determined to accomplish on finding themselves suddenly in shallow water and closely surrounded.

“The best way of destroying crocodiles is, by means of hooks baited with flesh attached to a strong cord, not hard twisted, but composed of many small strings, which get between the wide-set teeth of the animal, and cannot then be cut; a block of wood to which the lines are attached serves as a float, and points out the place to which the crocodile has retired to swallow the bait. An attendant, having laid hold of this float, pulls very gently until the animal's head appears above the water; then a shot directed between the head and the neck breaks the spine and

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renders the creature powerless ; after which it is dragged ashore and the tackling recovered."

From such an account, catching crocodiles appears about as easy as catching crickets ; but the present writer is not so sure that these ugly reptiles are quite so harmless, for when he was in Siam he once fell out of a boat on a river where crocodiles were present in large numbers, and his servants were certainly in the greatest state of fear until he was once more safe in the boat.

Most writers who deal with the hunting of wild animals in India seem to feel that the most dangerous beasts may be safely confronted by a brave man, and that tigers, leopards, and many other savage creatures are quite as much afraid of a human being as he ever is of them. And this seems to explain the possibility of their being hunted merely with spears, nets, and clubs. Major Forbes states that the leopards of Ceylon, which sometimes grow to be eight feet in length, are very destructive to cattle, yet they will seldom attack human beings unless they have been wounded or are acting in self-defence ; and he tells a story of a boy, about ten years of age, who was seized by a leopard, but who was dropped by the animal as soon as the natives set off in pursuit. The little fellow had not been severely injured, and probably the attack was, after all, only made in self-defence, for the boy had come sharply round the corner of a rock, and had disturbed the leopard as it lay stretched in its lair.

The same writer also relates how the people of Kandy, the capital of Ceylon, destroy leopards with spring-guns and with cross-bows set with large-bladed arrows. They also catch them in enclosures having

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a falling gate and formed round some animal put inside as a bait. Leopards are also caught in pit-falls, and by a platform (supporting a great weight of stones) suspended over a recently-killed bullock, the whole being so constructed as to crush any animal that passes underneath. The great fault of all these methods is that the trap often catches jackals and other creatures which are not worth bothering about, while the tyrant of the forest escapes.

Forbes wanted to get rid of a leopard that had killed two fine bullocks within his grounds. So he employed two native hunters to shoot the beast. The fire-arms possessed by the men were of such a wretched description that he had little hope of their being successful. However, they climbed up a tree, and about nine in the evening he heard two shots which followed each other very closely. On going to the place whence the sounds had issued, he found a large leopard lying dead on the carcass of the bullock, and perceived that the two bolts of iron that the hunter had fired had entered within an inch of each other, passed through the heart, and produced instant death.

It is as well to shoot from a tree if possible, for when the leopard is wounded it will attack any one within its reach. A carpenter from Kandy, a man nearly sixty years of age, was out looking for game, when he saw, and fired at, a leopard that was crouching in the jungle. The animal, though severely wounded, at once sprang forward and knocked the old man down. At the same time it seized his left arm in its mouth and began to devour it. In this predicament the old man drew his knife from his girdle and killed the animal by repeated stabs. The carpenter not only recovered from the terrible wounds and bruises

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he had received, but also partly regained the use of his arm.

It will be seen that the natives are not wanting in pluck in an emergency. Another illustration of this may be given from the experience of a planter in Mysore who was out shooting tigers. He had with him a native hunter who was a first-rate and plucky sportsman. The tiger that was being hunted flew at the Hindoo, but, as the beast charged, the man struck it with the big knife used in chopping down under-wood. So fierce was the blow that the tiger's skull was split open and the animal killed on the spot. But the man was thrown backwards with great force, and striking his head against a big stone, was, for a moment or so, rendered unconscious. When he came to himself he was surrounded by people. Pointing to his head, he exclaimed, "Look here!" Every one rushed forward, expecting to see a gaping wound, when the man, with a smile on his face, sent all the spectators into fits of laughter by remarking, "There'll be a bump on my head to-morrow as big as a cocoa-nut."

While we are talking about tigers, we may mention a very curious superstition held by the Hindoos. They say that when a man has been killed by a wild beast, his spirit entertains a feeling of the deepest malice against his own fellows. The following story, bearing on this point, was told by one native hunter, concerning another, to Captain Forsyth of the Bengal Staff Corps.

At one time a certain village in the neighbourhood of the Narbada Mountains was haunted by a perfect fiend of a man-eating tiger, who was very old and very cunning. There were two passes leading from the village, through the mountains, to the flat land

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beyond, and the tiger lived on a height between these two gaps. Whenever he saw any persons leave the village, he would rush across to the path they had chosen, and wait in hiding for them. As they passed near him, he would suddenly spring upon the party with a terrifying roar, and then disappear, carrying one of their number with him. Sometimes the people in the village would see the beast stalking a wretched traveller, and be able to warn him in time to take to a tree; but far oftener than not, the wily beast was only too successful in capturing his prey. Now and then he would disappear for a while, and then news would be brought of his depredations in other districts. At last matters grew to such a pitch that no one would go to or from the village by the road through the hills, though that road was by far the most convenient way of reaching other large villages not far away. When people left off using the pass, the tiger got hungry, for, having cultivated a taste for human flesh, he would eat no other. So he left the hills and hung round about the outskirts of the village, occasionally stalking the buffalo-drivers right up to their very doors as they came home in the evenings. But still he went hungry, for buffaloes in a body have no fear of a tiger, and they always discovered the fiend and drove him away before he could do any mischief. At last the man-eater hit upon the daring plan of lying in wait for one of the cowherds in his own house. When the village was quiet, and the men were at work in the fields, he crept quietly and unobserved down from the hills into the home of one of the men. In the evening this unfortunate man drove home his herd, secured them in the sheds, and then went merrily enough to get his supper. As he

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reached the door of his cottage, out leapt the terrible scourge of the village, and racing off to the hills with the cowherd in his horrid jaws, disappeared in the twinkling of an eye !

The news soon spread, and the villagers met at the sunset hour, under the shadow of the village peepul tree, to discuss this latest outrage. Among the crowd was a hunter, named Padam Singh, a famous man, for he had himself killed a tiger, and was therefore looked up to by his neighbours as a man of great authority on all matters connected with the destruction of wild beasts. He was a man of considerable pluck, and he at once proposed that they should all go in a body to rescue the remains of their friend from the jaws of the spoiler. Every man at once armed himself as best he could, and, to the sound of the beating of drums and the banging of tin trays, they marched forth to find the spot where the man-eater had retired to devour the cowherd. The tiger was duly impressed by this display of force and noise, and at once retreated to a safe hiding-place, leaving behind the half-eaten corpse.

Padam Singh was the only man in the crowd who possessed any kind of fire-arm, and he offered, if the relatives would leave the body on the ground and go home, to sit up all night in a tree, await the return of the tiger to complete his supper, and then shoot him before he was aware of danger. It was some time before the relatives would consent to this, but at last they agreed, and went home. Then Padam Singh perched himself on a tree and waited.

“ Ere long the man-eater returned, and the hunter watched his approach with immense satisfaction from his lofty position. The tiger approached within

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eighty yards or so—thirty too far for a sure aim with the rude matchlock. Then he paused, and, to his horror, the hunter saw the mutilated corpse slowly raise its right arm and point with a warning gesture at himself! On the signal, the man-eater instantly disappeared in the jungle. Transfixed with horror, Padam Singh remained glued to the tree. Shortly the tiger again returned, and again was the same mute warning given by the dead man, the tiger disappearing as before. A bright idea now struck the hunter, who had somewhat recovered his senses; and cutting two sharp stakes with his knife, he slipped down the tree and pegged both hands of the corpse firmly to the ground. Scarcely had he regained his perch when the man-eater again appeared; and, concluding from the absence of the signal that the danger no longer existed, proceeded quietly to resume his horrid feast. He had buried his jaws in the neck of the corpse, when the matchlock of the avenger flashed forth its contents. Struck full on the shoulder by the bullets with which Padam Singh had loaded his weapon, the dreaded man-eater rolled over dead on the body of his last victim.”

One more story of a native tiger-slayer, and we have done with tales of Indian tigers. The hero of this story was one Bussapa, the chief hunter of his village, and indeed one of the most famous men in the southern Mahratta country. One day he was sent for by the headman of the village to destroy a tiger which had carried off a number of cattle. He responded to the call, skirmished about till he found where the beast's headquarters were, fastened up a young bullock as a bait, and sat down beside it to watch. His only protection, in case of direct attack on the part of the

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tiger, was a small bush. Soon after sunset the tiger put in his appearance, pounced on the bullock, and began his supper. While he was gorging himself with the warm flesh and blood of his victim, Bussapa thrust his long, clumsy matchlock through the bush and fired. The tiger was severely wounded, but not killed: It rose with a sullen growl, peered round as if to try to discover its assailant, and being unable, on account of the bush and the gathering gloom, to spot the man with the gun, once more greedily fell upon the bullock. Bussapa was kneeling, only some two or three yards away, completely defenceless. Had he dared to reload, his movements would have proclaimed his whereabouts, and his wounded enemy would have sprung upon him at once. His bare knees were pressed against the gravel, which was cutting into his flesh, but he dared not move an inch. There he knelt, getting stiffer and stiffer, while just in front of him was the tiger, growling hoarsely over his evening meal, and keeping ever one eye on the bush whence he appeared to suspect danger. The wind blew his hot breath into the face of the almost crippled hunter, but the wretched man kept perfectly still. Colonel Campbell, who tells the story, continues: "The pain of his cramped position increased every moment—suspense became almost intolerable; but the motion of a limb, the rustling of a leaf, would have been death. Thus they remained, the man and the tiger, watching each other's motions; but even in this fearful situation, his presence of mind never for a moment forsook the noble fellow. He heard the gong of the village strike each hour of that fearful night, that seemed to him an eternity, and yet he lived. The tormenting mosquitoes swarmed round

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his face, but he dared not brush them off. That fiend-like eye met his whenever he ventured a glance towards the horrid spell that bound him; and a hoarse growl grated on the stillness of the night as a passing breeze stirred the leaves that sheltered him. Hours rolled on, and his powers of endurance were well-nigh exhausted; when, at length, the welcome streaks of light shot up from the eastern horizon. On the approach of day the tiger rose, and stalked away with a sulky face to a thicket at some distance; and then the stiff and wearied Bussapa felt that he was safe. One would have thought that, after such a night of suffering, he would have been too thankful for his escape to venture on any further risk. But the valiant Bussapa was not so easily diverted from his purpose; as soon as he had stretched his cramped limbs and restored the checked circulation, he reloaded his matchlock, and coolly proceeded to finish his work. With his match lighted, he advanced alone to the tiger, lying ready to receive him, and shot him dead by a ball in the forehead while he was in the act of charging."

It is all very well for man to hunt tigers, panthers, and other creatures, but suppose they turn the tables and hunt him. As a rule, this is not the case. Man is generally the slayer. But in the case of the man-eating tiger and the pard, it is the animal who stalks human beings and seeks their destruction. Robert Sterndale, in his text-book of *The Natural History of the Mammals of India and Ceylon*, has an interesting account of a particularly ferocious man-eating pard. Some of the natives who live near the Satpara Mountains have a belief that certain of their number have the power of changing themselves at will into animals,

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and then back again into the human form. Well, one day a man and his wife went out into the jungle, and presently saw a herd of nilgai feeding. The woman told her husband that she should like one of them killed, as the supply of meat in the larder at home was running low. The husband gave her a root to hold, saying, "Keep this safely till I return, and then give it me to smell." The woman promised to do as she was told, and the man at once changed himself into a pard, killed one of the nilgai, and came rushing back for the root; but the woman was so frightened when she saw the beast dashing towards her, that she lost her nerve, quite forgot what she had been told, threw the root into the jungle, and ran away. The pard hunted everywhere for the root, but in vain; and then, wild with anger and disappointment, rushed after the woman, tore her in pieces, and ever afterwards continued to wreak his vengeance upon the human race.

The history of this pard is, of course, a pure legend; but the beast himself was real enough in all conscience. He lived within a circle of about a hundred and twenty miles in circumference, and within this area no one ever knew where or when he might be found. In subtlety and daring he was a mighty hunter. He was like the human sportsman, killing, not for food, but just for the sake of killing; and often he would slay two or three people in a night, leaving them on the ground quite untouched, except for the one fatal wound in the throat. He sought his prey on the mountain and on the plain. He was so bold and strong that even the bravest of the native hunters refused to face him. They would not watch their fields for fear of him, and the wild pigs and deer took

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possession of the crops, and had a glorious time. At last there came a European, the teller of the story, and he, being not afraid, set to work to hunt the hunter. "I was out," says Sterndale, "several times after this diabolical creature, but without success; as I sat out night after night I could hear the villagers calling from house to house hourly, 'Are you awake, brothers? are you awake?' All day long I scoured the country with my elephant, all night long I watched and waited. My camp was guarded by great fires, my servants and followers were made to sleep inside tents, whilst sentries with muskets and bayonets were placed at the doors; but all to no purpose. The heated imagination of one sentry saw him glowering at him across the blazing fire. A frantic camp-follower spoilt my breakfast next morning ere I had taken a second mouthful, by declaring he saw him in an adjoining field. Then would come in a tale of a victim five miles off during the night, and then another, and sometimes a third. On one occasion, in my rounds after him, I came across a poor woman bitterly crying in a field; beside her lay the dead body of her husband. He had been seized by the throat and dragged across the fire made at the entrance of their little wigwam, in which they had spent the night watching their crops. The woman caught hold of her husband's legs, and, exerting her strength against the man-eater's, shrieked aloud. He dropped the body and fled, making no attempt to molest her or her little child of about four years of age. This man was the third he attacked that night.

"He was at last killed, by accident, by a native shikari who, in the dusk, took him for a pig or some such animal, and made a lucky shot; but the tale of

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his victims had swelled to over two hundred during the three years of his reign of terror."

In some parts of India there is often trouble with the bees. They are inoffensive enough in the cooler weather, but during the hot months, if they be disturbed or irritated, they swarm down on the offender and give him a very unpleasant time of it. Captain Forsyth relates a story of a man who lost his life in such an encounter. His companions had been shooting at some blue rock pigeons, and either the noise or the pigeons upset the temper of the little honey-gatherers. They swarmed down on the man, and a friend of his who was sitting in a boat just under the rocks. Both the men jumped into the water for protection. One man took long dives under the water, and so managed to get away and hide in one of the few accessible clefts of the rock; but the other, although a good swimmer, was attacked over and over again by the exasperated creatures, and in the end was drowned and carried down the stream.

Forsyth himself had experiences that show what can happen to the hunter of game when molested by bees. On one occasion his baggage animals and servants were attacked and scattered in every direction. Many of the men and beasts were so severely wounded that they were laid up for several days; and one of the baggage ponies was killed on the spot. The kit was flung about all over the place, and it took several days to gather it together again. Another time the hide of a valuable elephant was penetrated, and the huge beast fled terror-stricken to the depths of the jungle. And at the time of the Mutiny, a whole force of troops, horse and foot, was scattered by the attack of these terrible insects. There seems some-

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thing almost ludicrous in the fact that a man pursuing tigers should himself be injured, or even killed, by offended bees.

Regarded purely as a sport, the first place, as far as India is concerned, must be given to pig-sticking. This, according to General Baden-Powell, is "owing to the fact that it includes the use of a horse in bringing to terms a fast, bold, and dangerous quarry. Towards the end of the last century, our forefathers in India were given to riding down bears with spears, and as the supply of bears gave out, wild boar came to be hunted in their place. It was then found that the 'understudy' for the part of quarry—as sometimes is the case—was a far better performer than the principal, and thenceforward to this day pig-sticking has held the pride of place as the premier sport of India."

CHAPTER XIII

IN PURSUIT OF THE IVORY KING

THE African elephant has been hunted for food by the natives from time immemorial, and by Europeans, for the sake of its ivory, ever since the continent of Africa became in any way important to them. As illustrating what an ivory-hunter may have to put up with while pursuing his business, we propose, in this chapter, to confine ourselves almost entirely to the story of one man. His experiences are those of practically every hunter who has sought to enrich himself by destroying the "ivory king," but by keeping chiefly to the adventures of one hunter, instead of selecting incidents from the lives of several, we shall enable the reader to gain, perhaps, a more vivid idea of the fatigues and perils incurred in this occupation.

The hero of our stories is James Chapman, who spent fifteen years hunting and trading, and who has recorded his experiences and observations in a book called *Travels in the Interior of South Africa*.

It was over fifty years ago that he saw and shot his first elephant. One morning, traces of this mighty animal were discovered, and then diligently followed for hours through the forest, over vast logs and branches which the animals had broken down in their progress. At the end of this time the hunters emerged on a sandy elevation from which they could see a

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wide tract of bush, with patches of open ground running parallel to it. Chapman and his party had fallen in with a number of Boers, who, to his intense annoyance, insisted on accompanying him. On arrival at the edge of the bush, the various members of the expedition dispersed to seek for the tracks of the elephants. One of the party, who had ascended a tree to get a better view, nearly fell from the topmost branch with excitement when he caught sight of the herd. Chapman went aloft also, and as he had never before seen a live elephant in his native wilds, he too was considerably excited. He descended quietly, but his heart was throbbing violently, and he was so overcome with the feelings of the moment that for some time he could scarcely breathe. The countenances of all his companions betrayed the same eager and anxious expectations, and though the stupendous beasts were browsing peacefully at the distance of a mile or two, flapping their prodigious ears to disperse the flies, no one spoke except in whispers. They were all parched with thirst after their long march, but this was temporarily forgotten.

The scattered members of the party were collected, and it was proposed to rest the horses for half-an-hour while some one kept an eye on the movements of the herd; but so great was the impatience of the leader to bag his first elephant, that, after a short wait of only ten minutes, he sprang into his saddle and set off.

From the look-out, only a few straggling elephants had been seen; but soon a herd of at least two hundred came into view. They were marching in single file, and were evidently suspicious of danger. As far as could be observed, they were mostly cows and young bulls; but there was one great male, at

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least three or four feet higher than the rest. In an instant twelve mounted men dashed up to their sides, and, dismounting some sixty yards away, poured the contents of their rifles into the dense mass. Several of the elephants turned, their trunks elevated and their ears distended, as if inclined to retaliate, but as soon as the firing ceased they shuffled off at a rapid pace to seek the shelter of the forest. With rifles reloaded the hunters galloped up to the herd, and Chapman perceived that the big elephant was turning away from his fellows and taking a different direction. He followed the beast, riding up to and around him to get a side shot at the head; but the elephant persisted in turning away and keeping his head out of danger. He then got within about twenty paces, and dismounted with the idea that he was going to get a fine broadside. As the elephant turned towards him he fired point-blank, but, before the smoke had vanished from the muzzle of his gun, the beast raised aloft his huge trunk, uttered a shrill cry like the sound of some unearthly trumpet, and rushed upon the hunter at a pace he had little dreamt of.

With great agility and presence of mind Chapman scrambled on to his saddle, with the elephant only three or four paces from his back. The terrific and appalling cry which he uttered frightened the horse as much as the rider, and away they went at a break-neck speed over the uneven ground, which had been cut up in all directions by the herd. Three or four times, when the cry ceased, the hunter ventured to look round, hoping and believing that he was no longer pursued; but as often as he turned, the elephant sounded his war-note, and he sped on till he had gained about forty paces on his pursuer. He

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then turned his horse's head suddenly into a small thicket, but, becoming entangled in the bush, he deserted his steed, and crept through the underwood. Peeping out through the branches, he saw his baffled enemy sullenly returning to the herd.

Shortly afterwards Chapman was joined by his friend Otto Wirsing, who had also put four bullets into the beast, and the pair followed the retreating elephant for another quarter of a mile. When the animal reached a small tree with a tuft of boughs sufficient to conceal his head, he came to a standstill. Now was the hunter's opportunity. He approached to within thirty paces, dismounted, and aimed deliberately at the elephant's heart. He pulled the trigger; the gun missed fire, and down came the elephant more furious than before. The horse, startled by the wild shriek of the infuriated beast, would not permit his master to remount. It was a case of life and death. Chapman took a flying leap on to his horse's back, but did not properly reach the saddle. The elephant was on him before he could get firmly seated, so he let loose the reins, and held on like grim death. The horse flew over the treacherous ground, bending his back at every cry the elephant uttered, while the enraged beast followed at their heels, trumpeting vehemently, and violently coiling and throwing his trunk about. At length, with a strength born of the fear of instant death, Chapman gained his saddle, and kept straight for the open land till his pursuer was completely winded.

The elephant entered a dense bush, and concealed himself behind the first tree to which he came. Towards this tree rode the hunter, little recking that the beast was there. When they were within a few yards



AN INFURIATED ELEPHANT

Chapman took a flying leap into the saddle with the wounded elephant close at his horse's heels, and hung on like grim death.

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of each other, the tree bent down in their faces, and, with an awful cry, the beast returned to the charge ; but, having a clear field, the hunter again escaped. Later on Chapman made another attempt to bring down the animal. He left his horse, got in front of the elephant, and, hiding himself behind the tree, waited for the elephant to come near him. He then sent a bullet close behind the shoulder, and down came the victim with a long groan, and with a thundering crash that made the very earth shake.

In one of his expeditions after ivory, Chapman determined to cross the Madenisana Desert, a difficult enterprise owing to the want of water along his route. He shot half-a-dozen gnus, intending to fill their skins with water, so that if he found none on his route, he would be able to give the oxen that drew his wagons a couple of buckets of water each on the third day. They set out on July 2 to make their way across two thousand miles of trackless wilderness. The next day they reached a muddy pool of rain-water about fifteen miles within the desert area. The natives of the party were so delighted with this unexpected sight that they at once imagined that they would find water from one side of the desert to the other. Chapman, however, was not quite so sure about it, and ordered about eight gallons to be stored in the wagon.

They travelled all day, as fast as the oxen could draw the wagons, cutting their way through the dense bush. At night they slept in a dense field of low trees, where there were no signs of water. Next day they started early, and, with a rest of only one hour, went on till it was pitch-dark. But still no water ! The men, master as well as servants, were

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now put on an allowance of a pint a day. The oxen began to show signs of great distress, owing to the intense heat, the want of water, and the difficulty of moving through the heavy sand of the desert.

In the night, some of the oxen went off on their own accord to look for water, and it took the greater part of next day to find them and bring them home again. As the caravan proceeded the sand became heavier, the bush more dense, and the heat of the sun more intense. At last the oxen became so fatigued that several of them lay down and refused to work any longer. They were roused by methods more or less severe, and forced to go on.

By the evening of the third day they had covered only seventy-five miles, and the distress of the weary beasts had become almost heart-rending. They crawled round the wagons, poking their noses in at every opening, trying to butt the men from their cups of coffee, or to upset the boiling kettle over the fire. A heavy dew fell during the night, which brought the animals temporary relief; but by nine o'clock it was again intensely hot, and the trouble began all over again. The allowance of a pint of water per day for the men was hopelessly inadequate, and soon their husky voices and parched lips began to speak of approaching exhaustion. All that could be done was to slightly increase the allowance, but this only seemed to have the effect of creating a craving for more.

In this way they struggled on till the fourth day, the pace gradually getting slower and slower, till the hind-wheels of the wagon fell into a deep hole, out of which the oxen were unable to pull it. The wagon was unloaded; the men put their shoulders to the

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wheel, and, with the aid of a lever, lifted it out. The oxen were again harnessed, and the party staggered forward for another mile, when it was found impossible to proceed any further.

On this, the driver Abraham and the rest of the natives volunteered to go forward with the cattle and horses to some spot where water might be found. Chapman and another white man, Thompson, resolved to stay with the wagon to prevent it from being plundered. This being settled, the small quantity of water that was left was divided equally among masters and servants, and the pet milk-goat, that had followed them like a dog through all their troubles, was killed and equally divided likewise.

In the morning, wishing to spare the water, the men in the wagon cooked their maize in boiling fat, which caused many of the seeds to burst open and become four times the usual size, soft, rich, and beautifully white. This they mixed with a little coarse meal and fat, and made into a few cakes; but the rich food only increased their tormenting thirst. They lay down to rest with their rifles in their hands, but were unable to sleep. The following day they spent in measuring and re-measuring their scanty stock of water, and in waiting for their men who never came.

They had parted with their servants on the understanding that, as soon as they had found water, they would send back a supply. But another day passed, and no tidings came of their whereabouts. The water was gradually running short, and the two men began to discuss the advisability of abandoning the wagon, after all, and making their way in some direction that would be likely to lead to a spring or pool. They decided to wait till they had only a pint and a half each,

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and then set out, limiting themselves to half a pint a day, with the hope that in three days they would reach a river which they knew was about a hundred miles to the north-west.

They remained thus on their meagre allowance, and in a state of extreme anxiety, until Tuesday night, when, just as they had made every preparation for starting early on the morrow, and had laid themselves down to take what they thought was their last slumber at the wagon, they were roused by the barking of a dog, and the sound of the smack of a whip applied to a jaded steed. In another minute one of the servants came up with two horses, one of which carried two kegs of water.

It appeared from the boy's account that the men had unwisely entrusted the carrying of the water to one of their number, a most consummate scoundrel and thief, who robbed them of the whole of it on the first night. They rode the horses and oxen as fast as they could during the day, but at night the men, overcome with fatigue, fell asleep, and the cattle decamped. It was not till the morning of the third day that they found a pool of dirty rain-water, about forty-five miles away. They lost, however, only one ox, which died of thirst before the pool was reached.

In December of the same year, Chapman was, for various reasons into which we cannot now enter, left alone in a wilderness, in charge of a portion of the ivory he had collected, while Abraham and the other men were engaged in bringing up the remainder from a distance. He packed up the tusks, one above the other, under a tree, to a height of about three feet, and made his bed on the top of the heap. He kindled his fire, and then went with his pail for water to the

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river, a quarter of a mile off. On his way back he was seized with a queer sensation of giddiness and stupor. He felt sick and weak, and had violent pains in his head, neck, and back. He had caught a fever prevalent during the summer in that region. Before his strength utterly failed him, he looked out certain medicines that he possessed, and took a strong dose. He placed a large log of wood on the fire, a bucket of water by his side, lay down panting with fever, and soon fell into a state of semi-oblivion, haunted by the most frightful dreams. The next morning found him in a state of burning fever. He took deep draughts of the cold water that stood beside him, the craving for moisture returning every minute. He had expected one of his wagons to arrive in the evening, but it did not come, and he fell into the same dreamy, half-conscious state, losing sight of everything around him, and fancying that he had been carried into terrible places, where he was fighting all kinds of demons, and where he was himself converted into a many-headed monster, a hideous serpent or some other reptile.

The third day after Abraham's absence he was able to take another dose of medicine, but he fell again into his former helpless condition. All round him, on the branches of the trees, were troops of vultures, waiting to devour him as soon as his life should be extinct. They had already robbed him of his store of meat, which he had been unable to protect, and they were now impatiently awaiting his death. When all the water in the bucket was exhausted, he crawled out of bed, and with a small kettle staggered to the river. He fell on the ground, but his thirst was so great that he renewed his efforts from time to time.

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The water was only four hundred yards away, but he was three hours getting there on his hands and knees. He quenched his maddening thirst, rested, and crawled back to his fireplace with his little kettle of water. There he lay till about five o'clock in the afternoon, when one of Thompson's men put in an appearance, and afforded him some assistance.

When Abraham and the others turned up they were all huddled together in a wagon, and suffering from the same kind of fever that had prostrated their master. All the ivory was now put into the wagon, and the fourteen oxen had a pretty heavy load, for there were five sick natives lying among the tusks. They set off on the 23rd of December, and on the evening of Christmas Day the hind part of the wagon came down with a crash, pitching out all the sick. They were now near the plains where another of the wagons had been left on a previous occasion, and this was brought in by some of the healthy servants. Into it they put three thousand pounds of ivory; they seated the weaker of the sick men on the top, left the broken wagon in charge of a servant, and set off across the plains.

It would not be possible, in the space at our disposal, to follow Mr. Chapman everywhere in his search for ivory. We can only choose here and there from his pages incidents that prove the perils of the professional elephant-slayer.

One evening, during a very heavy thunder-storm, a large snake crept down the overhanging branches of a tree, dropped into the wagon, and so drove everybody else out of it. The evicted tenants groped about in the dark outside the vehicle, afraid to go back to bed. Finally, they spent a most miserable night in a neigh-

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bouring hut which they had constructed as a defence against mosquitoes. They lay down without any blankets, as nobody dared to fetch one for fear of bringing the snake along at the same time.

Snakes were a nuisance at all times, for they came after the mice that had built their nests in the wagon. One day, while he was out with the wagon, Chapman marched ahead of the oxen to pick a road, while his companions sat on the vehicle to guide it safely amid the trees and fallen logs. On looking round to see how the wagon got through a difficult pass, he felt himself treading on something soft and slippery, and, looking down, found an enormous black snake, eight feet long, coiling itself round his boots, and striking at them with its fangs! He jumped away from the reptile, but his foot slipped, and, in trying to recover his equilibrium, he trod again within its coils. At length he made a tremendous leap, shook away his enemy, and got out of the reach of its fangs. The reptile immediately glided into a hole and hid itself. On another occasion, while sitting at breakfast, a snake fell from the tree over his head into the fire; and the servants frequently found the loathsome things under their blankets.

Worse even than poisonous snakes or charging elephants were the treacherous natives, with whom Chapman had more than one dangerous encounter. By a superb display of courage and presence of mind he managed to escape a number of threatening disasters. His book contains an excellent account of a sanguinary conflict between a friend of his, Mr. Green, and the tribe of the Ovambos, and this we give here, in preference to any of those Chapman tells about himself, because it is fuller in detail.

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Green was accompanying some missionaries, chief of whom was a Mr. Hahn. His servants were of the Damara tribe, and filled with dread and hatred of the Ovambo people among whom they were encamping at the time when the incident we are about to relate occurred. The Damaras would scarcely move an inch from their camp unless armed, and repeatedly cautioned their master against the Ovambos. The latter came in hundreds, and surrounded the wagons, carrying with them their instruments of war, a custom quite unusual in South Africa, where the rules of the game forbid a native to approach a stranger with weapons in his hand. But Mr. Green refused to look upon this as an act of hostility, and attributed it merely to local custom.

Two days before the party decided to quit that part of the country, a large party of Ovambo men and women engaged in dancing near the wagons, and continued their noisy amusements until a very late hour of the night. Hahn sent one of his Damaras to request them to make a little less noise, as his people were tired and wanted to go to sleep. All the answer that the servant got was, "You slave, you dog, how dare these people that have come here to be killed interfere with us?"

That was quite enough to awaken suspicion in Mr. Green's mind, and he watched the doings of his unwelcome visitors with great attention. When the caravan departed, certain precautions were taken for its preservation. The loose cattle and the donkeys were sent in front, under an escort of all the available Damaras. Next came the four wagons, that of Mr. Hahn bringing up the rear. Behind were a number of the Ovambo, with whom Mr. Hahn walked for some

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distance, engaging with them in conversation. Green thought that some treachery was meditated, so he instantly hastened to the spot, and begged the missionary not to trust himself among them, but to be on his guard. Hahn took the advice, and seated himself on his wagon.

In front, the crowd of Ovambos was getting too large to be pleasant. They were rending the air with their peculiar wild war-cry, and Green rode forward to reconnoitre. While there he heard the report of fire-arms, and, on turning round, perceived the shots to proceed from some of the wagons. Retracing his steps without loss of time, he found, to his horror, that one of the Damara servants was lying in a pool of blood upon the ground. The man had been struck by the chief's son, who had stabbed his victim from behind, and then immediately retreated. The unfortunate man had just strength enough left to turn round and fire upon his treacherous foe, when he fell, expiring within half-an-hour after having received the fatal wound.

This barbarous act called for vengeance. Green instantly turned his horse's head from the pitiful scene, and rode forward to meet one man who, more daring than the rest, was boldly advancing, poising his quivering spear above his head, ready to launch it at the white man's breast. When within a short distance, the latter suddenly dismounted, levelled the rifle, and, while the man was hesitating, slowly pulled the trigger with a steady hand, and the savage fell. Remounting quickly, he took one glance at the fearful scene around, and realised that the lives of himself and party could only be preserved at the cost of an indiscriminate slaughter of their foes. Fortunately he

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was well armed. He had a rifle in his hand, a six-chambered revolver and a stout hunting-knife in his girdle, and a sword near at hand for use at close quarters.

The enemy began gathering in great masses on every side, and the caravan left its old route and made for the open plains. The battle, as one may not inaptly call it, now became general. Arrows were flying thick and fast around them. The missiles were especially directed towards Green and Hahn, who were regarded as the chiefs of the party. The return fire was not a particularly brisk one, for there were only eight natives, in addition to the two Europeans, who could use their guns with sufficient accuracy to be of much use. These fired slowly and deliberately, their cool and steady behaviour delighting their leader, and discomposing the Ovambo, who had no idea of the deadly effect of fire-arms.

During the retreat the caravan halted repeatedly, especially when the enemy approached too closely, in order to convince them that the retreat was in no sense a running away ; and even in the face of several hundred savages the wagons were drawn up near a watercourse, and the empty jars and other vessels deliberately filled. While some of the Damaras were thus employed, Green uncased his elephant-rifle, and fired over the heads of the front rank of his adversaries into the group at the rear. It was impossible to ascertain whether any one was killed by these discharges, but at all events they had the effect of sending a great many of the assailants scampering away in all directions. Eleven men had been seen to fall as the result of being struck by bullets, but the actual number killed was not known ; for every time

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the guns were fired, the whole of the pursuing forces simultaneously fell flat upon the ground. In the caravan not one person was even wounded, though most of the defenders had narrow escapes from the arrows that fell round them in showers.

The fight had gone on for two hours, and the number of the enemy still increased. Upon several occasions they appeared ready for a general rush ; but at such times Green directed his fire at the leading and most daring men, and, without exception, they paid for their rashness with their lives. Had the Ovambo only succeeded in closing upon them, they must inevitably have been destroyed to a man, for the odds were fearful—certainly not less than five to six hundred on the one side, and only a handful on the other, and some of these were occupied in attending to the wagons and the cattle.

On account of the frequent losses they met with on every occasion when they attempted to advance, the enemy at last began to show signs of fear, and eventually dispersed, so that about three hours after the commencement of the action not a soul was to be seen.

Truly, many tunes are played before the ivory finds its way from the elephant's tusk to the keys of your piano !

CHAPTER XIV

HUNTING WILD BEASTS IN AFRICA

IN a continent as large as Africa, which extends through so many degrees of latitude, and possesses so many varieties of climate, wild animals of many kinds exist in great numbers. It is said that Africa, more than any other continent, abounds in the variety of its animal life, and this is especially the case on the plains in the interior of South Africa, which literally swarm with wild beasts. The hyena, giraffe, zebra, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, elephant, gorilla, lion, and crocodile make a goodly list, and there are enough stories about any one of them to fill a book. We shall content ourselves with selecting only a few of these, and confining our attention almost entirely to the southern portion of the continent.

We have been so accustomed to regard most wild animals as the enemy and prey of the hunter, that it is curious to learn that in some cases they actually seem to assist him. Gordon Cumming tells us that on one occasion his friend Campbell shot two springboks, of which the first was entirely eaten by the vultures, and skinned as neatly as if the deed had been done by the hand of man; but the second only had its leg broken by the ball. It was making off, when a jackal suddenly appeared on the bare plain, and, after a

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good chase, this animal ran it down, thus saving the hunter much fatigue. The jackal had literally finished the hunter's work, and this is by no means an infrequent occurrence. Often when a springbok is thus wounded, a number of jackals will appear and assist the hunter in taking his quarry. It is said, also, that in some of the more distant hunting-grounds of the interior, even the lion will help the hunter in a similar manner. Mr. Oswell and a companion of his were one day galloping along the shady banks of the Limpopo, in full pursuit of a wounded buffalo, when they were joined by three lions, who accompanied them in the chase. The buffalo kept bravely on, followed by the three lions, with Oswell and his companion in the rear. Soon the lions sprang upon the buffalo and dragged him to the ground, and a terrific struggle ensued. The men approached, and opened fire upon the royal trio. As each ball struck a lion, the beast imagined it to be another thrust from the horn of the buffalo, and redoubled its savage onslaught on the prostrate prey. At length the sportsmen succeeded in bowling over two of the lions, upon which the third, not caring to be thus repaid for his valuable assistance, left the buffalo, and bounded away out of sight.

But it is with the doings of natives in search of food and skins, and not with the exploits of European sportsmen, that we have to deal. These natives are very superstitious, and possess all kinds of charms for protecting themselves from savage animals, and for ensuring the accuracy of their aim, whether with gun, spear, or arrow. A curious instance of this is told by Gordon Cumming. It appears that one of the chiefs of a Bechuana tribe had two muskets, but no powder,

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Cumming gave him some of his own powder in exchange for curios and other things ; but every time the guns were fired, the mark was missed. This was hardly to be wondered at, for the people were so afraid of their weapons that when they fired in any direction they held the gun almost at arm's length, and turned their faces from the object they desired to hit. They were unwilling to ascribe their want of success to their own timidity and the curious method of their firing, and came to the conclusion that the powder was sick and ought to have a dose of medicine.

Accordingly, the chief and all the long-headed men of the village assembled in the market-place, placed the unworthy gunpowder upon a convenient receptacle, sat round it, and commenced a variety of ceremonies and incantations with the view of restoring it to perfect health. At length, one profound wiseacre informed the chief that fire was necessary to complete the cure. Fire was therefore introduced along with other medicines, and a censer of hot embers was passed to and fro over the powder. Suddenly, however, an unlucky spark, that might have known better, sprang from the censer into the powder, which of course exploded. The quantity was very great, and the consequence was that the men and their chief were blown head over heels on every side. Several of the "powder doctors" were so severely burnt that they afterwards died, and the rest never again tried any of their patent medicines upon such a hot-tempered patient.

Some remarkable stories are told by Sir J. E. Alexander, of adventures which befell during an expedition which he made into the interior of Africa for the purposes of discovery, and strange though some

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of them be, we have the gallant soldier's word for their accuracy. The first concerns a fisherman and a baboon.

A man was one day fishing by himself under the shelter of some trees, when he was much amused by the antics of a few young baboons on the cliffs on the other side of the stream. While he was laughing at their merry pranks, he suddenly heard a loud "quah" behind him, and, looking round, found a huge baboon regarding him with vicious intent. He had no weapon with which to defend himself, and was by no means pleased with the appearance of his visitor. The hairy monster again cried "quah," when a number of other baboons were seen rapidly descending from a neighbouring hill. There was no time to be lost, so the fisherman snatched up a branch that was lying close to him, and, when the baboon came down upon him, showing his horrid teeth, the man struck it desperately over the head. The baboon lifted its left arm to defend itself, seized the stick, and wrenched it out of the man's grasp. Flight was now the only possible course of action, and the man took to his heels, followed by the baboon, crying lustily "quah, quah." The chase was continued till the open country was reached, when the baboon gave up the pursuit.

Among the native hunters employed by Alexander in his expeditions was one man, named Henrick, who was noted for his wonderful powers of running and endurance. It is said that once, when his powder had run short, he took a hunting-knife and, knowing there were zebras in his neighbourhood, went out to seek them and run them down.

He walked on his toes, with an elastic springing step, at the rate of nearly five miles an hour, and paced

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across the plain, glancing at the ground on either side of him, and looking out for the marks of the zebra's feet. Presently he was rewarded by a glimpse of footprints on the sand. He stooped to the ground, took off everything that might impede his movements, and got as near as he could to the herd, without being perceived. He had not, however, gone very far before the watchful eye of the stallion discovered him. He then left the cover of the bushes, and the herd, which had been alarmed, galloped off. Henrick, without putting himself at the top of his speed, began to follow. The zebras stopped to graze, and the hunter, moving like a race-horse, and with his stomach near the ground, bounded towards them. Again they rushed away, snorting and tossing their striped heads in the air, and twitching their light, mule-like tails in the pride of fancied fleetness and freedom. The hunter never slackened for a moment in his pursuit. He cleared stones, bushes, and all other impediments, and, after another three or four miles, had got his "second wind," and was free from all feeling of breathlessness or fatigue. The ground flew under his feet, producing a kind of dizziness, so that he was unable to distinguish between the heaven and the earth. Occasionally the zebras stopped, as before, to graze, but their rests were never of long duration, for the enemy was getting gradually nearer and nearer. He drove them towards the steep face of a rock, and, while they were hesitating about the means of escape, bounded among them, seized one of the striped troop by the tail, swung the animal to one side, and threw the whole weight of his own body towards the ground at the same time. The zebra fell upon its side and received a stab in the chest. It was then allowed to

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rise and run away. It kept up with its companions for a short distance, when, weak from loss of blood, it gradually fell behind the troop. Its comrades waited for it—up dashed Henrick again—there was another fatal thrust, and the body lay lifeless upon the ground, covered with perspiration and dust. The successful hunter then returned to his hut, and sent his people with pack-oxen to bring home the prize.

On another occasion Henrick was out on a hunting expedition for springbok with two or three other men, and they were just within reach of the game, when they crossed the fresh track of a rhinoceros. Shortly afterwards they saw a large black male in a bush, and Henrick, with a long elephant-rifle, wounded the beast severely in the fore-leg. The rhinoceros charged, and the men fled. The animal singled out one of the company and pursued him closely; but while the rhinoceros was ploughing up the ground at the man's heels, the latter jumped dexterously on one side, and the brute missed him. Before the animal could pull itself up and change its course, the whole of the party had got into a tree, and had left their enemy vainly trying to scent them out.

The men in the tree-tops saw before them a long and dreary wait ere they could be relieved; and one of them, named Arasap, whose only weapon was an assegai, said to his comrades, "What are we all up here for, doing nothing? Let's shoot!" "All right!" replied Henrick; "if you're in such a hurry, here's my powder-horn and my ball-belt; and the gun's at the bottom of the tree."

Arasap descended from the tree, loaded the gun, approached the rhinoceros, and fired. The animal

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was severely, but not mortally, wounded in the jaw. The ball, which was made of lead, flattened itself against the bone without breaking it; but the force of the impact stunned the animal and brought it to the ground.

The hunters now collected round the rhinoceros, imagining it to be incapable of further resistance; and Arasap, proud of the feat he had accomplished, was telling the others how to stab it with deadly effect, when the beast began to recover. Henrick called to the men to run for their lives. As for himself, he scuttled off across the plain and was soon out of danger. The rhinoceros started up, and singled out the unfortunate Arasap, and, with ears erect, screaming and bellowing with rage, thundered after him. Arasap, seeing that he would be unable to outrun his foe, tried the same trick that he had seen so successfully tried by the first hunter—that is to say, he stopped short, and hoped the rhinoceros would pass him. But the brute had also learned the trick, and was not to be baffled a second time in this way. It caught the doomed man on his horn under the left thigh, cut it open as if with an axe, and tossed him high into the air.

Arasap fell facing the rhinoceros. The beast rushed at him furiously, ripped his body open, and again threw him aloft. Henrick looked round, and saw his companion first rise in the air, and then fall heavily to the ground. The rhinoceros waited for his descent, when it again ran up to the dead man, trod upon him, and pounded him.

After this tragedy the beast limped away to the shelter of a bush; whereupon Henrick and the others crept up to destroy him. Out dashed the beast again,

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and would have caught another man, had it not been for a dog that got in the way. The rhinoceros turned sharply round after the animal, and in so doing snapped its already half-broken leg. It fell, and being unable to recover itself, was immediately killed.

The rhinoceros is often accompanied by a beautiful bird with green back and blue wings, that sits on one of his horns, and acts as a sentinel to warn him of approaching danger. When the rhino is standing at his ease among the thick bushes, or rubbing himself against the trunk of a tree, the bird remains in close attendance, feeding upon the insects that are to be found either flying around the head of the monster or reposing in the folds of the thick wrinkles with which his head and neck are covered. If the beast moves his head slightly and without alarm, the bird flies from his horns to his shoulders, remains there a short time, and then returns again to its former curious perch. But if the bird, from its elevated position, notes the approach of the hunter, it flies suddenly up into the air, and the rhinoceros instantly rushes, desperately and fearlessly, to the spot where he hears or scents the hunter.

African natives have many ways of killing the "river horse." At times they attack it with harpoons to which are attached lines ending in floats. The position of the floats indicates where the wounded creature has taken refuge, and he is at once followed in canoes and speared to death. At other times they spread across his path to the water a strong line a few inches from the ground. One end of this line hangs from a tree over the path and supports a huge block of wood to which a heavy spear-head has been fastened. When the animal crosses the path he pulls

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the cord and releases the block, so that the spear-head is driven deeply into his body. It is possible that he may not be immediately killed, and may make off to the water. To prevent his final escape, a float is attached to the end of the rope, and when the animal enters the water he drags this after him. The float is the sure and certain index to his whereabouts, and he is ultimately found by his pursuers and captured.

Though his legs are thick and clumsy, he possesses unusual speed, and no man can hope to escape him by running on open ground. Once he has a man fairly in his wicked eye, in a place where there is no possibility of hiding, death is tolerably certain for the man on foot. The monster, snorting and uttering occasionally a short fiendish scream of rage, bears down in a cloud of dust, tearing up the ground with his horns, and kicking out his hind-legs in a perfect fury of passion. Once within reach of his victim, he thrusts his horns between the man's legs, hauls him into the air as if he were a rag, and tosses him many yards away. The brute now looks about him, and if there is the least movement of life, runs at the poor wretch, rips him open, and tramples him to death.

Another of Alexander's native hunters told him the following story of pluck and skill. "Once upon a time my father took his sons out to hunt; he only had a gun, and we had assegais and knives. At first we were very unsuccessful; we found nothing till the second day; we were very hungry, when we came upon a rhinoceros. The old man soon wounded it in the leg, and he then told us to throw stones at it, to make the wound worse—so we crept upon the rhinoceros, followed it, and threw stones with such effect that at last it lay down from pain. I, being

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armed with a knife, then approached it from behind, and commenced to hamstring it, while my elder brother, Cobus, tried to climb on the back of the rhinoceros to thrust his lance into its shoulder. He had just begun to climb, when the rhinoceros rose suddenly with a terrible blast or snort, and we all ran off as fast as we could to a tree, and there held a consultation about our further proceedings.

“We had not been long at the tree, when the rhinoceros, observing where we were, rushed towards us with his horns at first in the air, and then as he came near he tore up the ground with them. We scattered ourselves before him, when Cobus, getting in a passion, stopped short in his flight, called the rhinoceros an ugly name, and turned and faced it. The rhinoceros, astonished at this unexpected manœuvre, also stopped and stared at Cobus, who then commenced calling out loudly and abusing the monster. It now seemed to be seized with fear, for it went off, when Cobus, who had a heart like a lion and was as active as an ape, immediately pursued the rhinoceros, seized the tail, sprung with its assistance on its back, rode it well, and plunging the assegai deep into its shoulder, it fell, and was despatched by the rest of us.”

One day a man came up to Alexander and showed him a great hole in his arm that had been caused by the bite of a lion. The man had been out hunting for deer, and, at a moment when his gun was unloaded, discovered six lions, all quite near to him. As he was on horseback, he at first tried to escape by flight; but the horse was so terrified that it would not budge an inch. The man at once dismounted. His horse jumped clean over one bush, and he jumped over another, with one of the lions on his track. Know-

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ing that it was useless to attempt to run away from a lion, he turned round and faced him, the animal standing within five yards of him, glaring at him, and growling like an angry dog. He coolly tried to load his rifle ; but the moment the lion saw him move, he flew at him, got his left arm in his mouth, and held him fast. The man then felt for his knife, and managed to open it ; but discovered that the point was so blunt that it would be impossible to stab his savage foe with it. He then took his sjambok, a whip of rhinoceros hide, which was hanging from his wrist, and hit the lion, with all his might, over the head. Another lion now appeared. "It's all up," said the hunter to himself ; "I'm a dead man now !" But the first lion, to his surprise, quitted his hold and went off. The second one gave him a blow on the shoulder which threw him heavily to the ground, and then went off likewise. When he recovered from the combined effects of his fears and the stunning force of the blow, there were no lions at all within sight. He gathered himself together as best he could, got home again, and, applying a number of simple native remedies, recovered in a short time. He bore, however, for life, in the hole in his arm, the marks of his unfortunate encounter.

The Namaquas sometimes display wonderful intrepidity and desperate courage in attacking lions. One of them had one of his cattle killed by a lion, and at once proceeded to take his revenge, as is the custom with the Namaqua people. They do not molest the King of Beasts as long as he does not interfere with them or their property ; but they never fail to try to punish any attacks upon themselves or their herds. Hence the man and three of his cousins went forth



A DESPERATE SITUATION

The hunter's gun was unloaded when suddenly six lions made their appearance close by. His horse was too terrified to move, so he leapt down and was at once attacked by one of the lions. He hit it with all his strength with his sjambok, and to his surprise it went off. The second lion struck him to the ground and likewise went off. When he recovered his senses they had all disappeared.

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to chastise the thief. They tracked him to a bush, and were preparing for the encounter with their guns, when the lion unexpectedly appeared on the scene to offer battle. The three cousins promptly fled, and the man who had lost his cattle was immediately thrown to the ground by the lion. The monster seized him by the left arm, and was on the point of dragging him away to eat him at his leisure, when the runaways, seeing the painful predicament of their relative, at once returned to his assistance. They were afraid to fire, for fear of wounding or killing the victim, but one of them jumped on the lion's back and laid hold of his ears ; another hung on to his tail ; and the third, as soon as a good opportunity presented itself, sent a ball through the animal's forehead. The lion at once let go his hold, but, as he writhed in the agony of death, he seized the hand of the man he had wounded and crushed it between his teeth.

The following story is a little more amusing, and shows how even lions may suffer from a sudden shock.

A Bushman had been hunting zebras with his arrows, and had just succeeded in wounding one of them, when a lion sprang out of a thicket to dispute the prize with the slayer. The Bushman, being near a convenient tree, threw down his arms and climbed for safety into one of the topmost branches. The lion allowed the wounded zebra to escape, and turned his whole attention to the Bushman. He walked round and round the tree, looking up from time to time and growling angrily. At length he lay down at the foot of the tree and kept watch all night. The Bushman managed to keep awake until just before dawn, when he was overcome by fatigue and fell asleep. As he slept, he dreamt that he had gone to sleep and had

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fallen into the lion's mouth. The dream so frightened him that he awoke in great terror, lost his balance, and fell from the branch right on the top of the lion. The animal, in its turn, was so startled by this unexpected attack from above, that it lost its nerve, uttered one mighty roar, and fled as if it had been shot.

One Sunday evening Alexander was walking up and down in front of his tent, gazing at the stars, and admiring their beauty as they twinkled brightly in the clear southern skies. His men had wrapped themselves up in their sheep-skins, and were contentedly settling themselves for sleep. In the midst of the silence, a woman's voice was heard calling in the Namaqua language, "Stand up and help, friends!"

Alexander roused the faithful Henrick, and they tried to find out what was the matter, but could discover nothing. The cattle seemed uneasy, and moved about as if scenting danger; but in a little while all was quiet again. "It must have been lions," said Henrick.

Next morning they found traces of three lions that had been making straight for the tent, but which had been turned off by the dogs. These beasts had also made attempts in other directions, but had been scared away by the fires.

At eight o'clock a man came in with the news that one of the oxen was lying dead, and partly eaten, on the river's bank. It had strayed away the day before, and had not been found in time to be driven in with the rest of the herd in the evening, and had therefore fallen a prey to the lions.

Alexander went to one of his men, named Aramap, and asked him if he were inclined for a lion hunt.

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“Yes,” replied the native, “quite ready, if you will find the guns.”

Accordingly a strong party was got together; twenty muskets were loaded, and lances, bows, arrows, and clubs were distributed among those who had no fire-arms.

They made for the spot where the bullock was lying on its side, with marks of teeth in its throat, and the skin and flesh stripped off its hind quarters. They looked about, and found the spoor of two of the lions who had gone south, and that of another that had gone east. They decided to follow the two.

The natives went over the ground at a rapid pace, talking and making a noise, when, about a mile from the dead bullock, a large lion started out of a bush and galloped away from them among the trees and underwood. A shout was immediately raised by the whole body of the hunters, and they and their dogs, without the slightest hesitation, at once gave chase.

They ran down hills, along valleys, and up steep slopes, jumped over rocks, and were torn by the sharp points of the thorn bushes. Sometimes they lost sight of the lion altogether, and then they would see him again, galloping or trotting on before them with the dogs close at his heels. They ran for an hour, the broken ground trying their strength to the uttermost. It seemed as though the lion would never be brought to bay; but just as his pursuers were beginning to lose hope, the beast began to slacken his pace. Some of the native hunters then got ahead, and the lion, seeing himself cornered, retreated into a large bush.

The dogs surrounded the bush, barking in mingled fear and anger, but not daring to attack; for the lion raised himself, opened his mouth, shook his mane,

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lashed the ground with his tail, and roared terrifically. The hunters were just forming into a line to give a volley, when the lion again dashed off at right angles to his former course, with all the dogs after him.

The hunters had recovered their breath for another run, when a fine big black dog, who was leading the chase, bit the heel of the lion. In a moment the aspect of the animal was completely changed. He wheeled round, with every hair on end, his teeth displayed, and his tail in the air. Despising the dogs, he concentrated his whole attention on the men, and rushed towards them at a furious pace.

He dashed through the bushes, and sprang into the air over a rock, tearing off a portion of it with his hind claws. The word to fire was given, and a ball was lodged in his left shoulder. Over he rolled, only twelve yards away, but, recovering himself immediately, came on once more, frantic with pain and rage. Another volley was fired, and he fell dead, with bullets in his head and side—only four yards away from the muzzles of the guns.

A Namaqua chief and two hundred of his men were making their way up the Nosop River, hunting with guns and bows and arrows, when a series of accidents occurred that illustrate in a remarkable manner the possibilities of disaster to those who seek game in the land of the "King of Beasts."

The first day some of the hunters were following an elephant in the river, when they came across lions, which pursued them ; and they only saved themselves by abandoning a horse, which the lions devoured. Three of the party then made a screen of bushes opposite a pool where they expected elephants or rhinoceroses to put in an appearance. Two of the

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men saw one animal, fired at it, and missed ; and the third was on the point of trying his luck, when a lion that they had not noticed sprang at him, and carried him off before either of his companions could render any assistance. All they ever saw of him after that was one solitary leg.

Next day one of them wounded a rhinoceros, which turned and charged him. It came on uttering its usual horrid scream, and tossed him in the air, cutting his leg severely. His gun flew one way, and he another. He was picked up terribly wounded, but still alive, and was sent home on horseback.

Immediately after this two Namaquas and a Bushman were sitting by a fire at night, protected, as they thought, by a screen of bushes, when a lion came, seized one of them, dragged him through the fire, and tore the flesh off his back. One of the men fired, but missed ; whereupon the lion dropped its dying victim, and growled across the fire at the other two men, who were so frightened that they dared not repeat the shot. The lion then took up its prey in its mouth and went off to finish its supper.

Alarmed at these disasters, the Namaquas now took refuge together in a well-screened enclosure, and sent out a Damara slave to fetch water. He had no sooner reached the pool than he was seized by a lion. He called loudly, but in vain, for help, and in the morning all that was left of him was his skull, licked clean by the rough file of the lion's tongue.

This was more than the party could stand, and they left off pursuing deer and other food-animals in order to undertake a deliberate war against their terrible and persistent foe. They found the tracks of a number of lions, and soon saw the beasts making off

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amid the long grass and bushes. Those of the party who had horses mounted them, and were soon able to shoot one of the lions who had taken refuge in a thicket. They then sat down, made a good meal, and rested. In the afternoon they went after the larger and more savage of the two lions—the one who had probably been responsible for all the disasters that had occurred to them on this expedition.

The lion had ensconced himself in a patch of reeds. These they set on fire on the windward side, in order to drive the lion out; and as he emerged from the midst of the blazing cover one man fired at him, but missed. The animal took no notice, but coolly and deliberately marched away from them. Two better marksmen fired and hit him, but not in a vital part. Another man's ball then struck short, entering the ground in front of the lion, who immediately charged with a loud roar.

Two of the hunters again fired and missed, and the lion seized one of them and tore open his chest. The chief, the brother of the unfortunate man, rushed to his assistance, threw down his gun, and took hold of the lion by the tail to make him let go his expiring victim. The lion did as he was requested, but turned on the man at his tail and shook himself clear. With one stroke of his paw he grazed the fellow's forehead, and with one bite he tore a large piece of flesh from his left hand. The wounded man sprang back, but the lion struck him on the side and felled him. Up rose the torn and bleeding hunter, but the lion, thirsting for revenge and smarting under his own wounds, fixed his claws in the sash and his teeth in one of the knees of the chief. Again the poor fellow fell, and the lion crouched over him, mangling and tearing his left

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arm. A feeble voice wailed out for help ; some friends gathered at a little distance behind the lion ; a shot was fired, and the animal rolled over with a bullet through his brain.

The dead body was taken up and buried, and the hunters, having lost four of their number at the very beginning of the expedition, thought it just as well to give up the chase and return home with their wounded chief.

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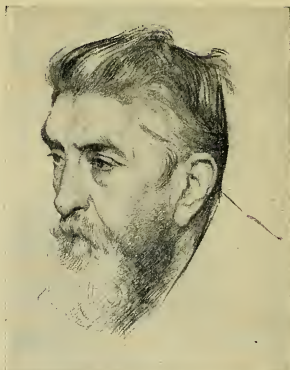


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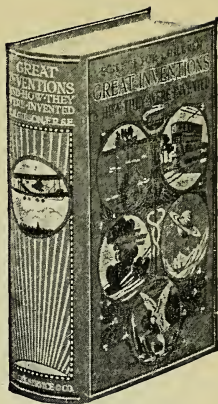
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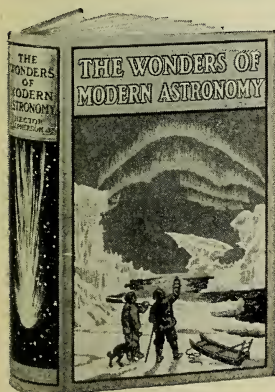
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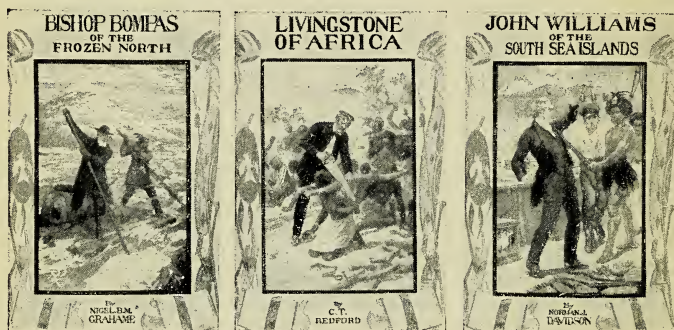
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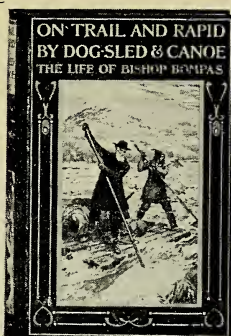
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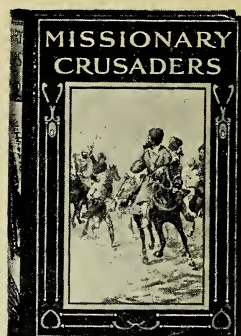
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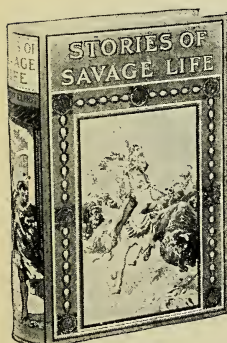
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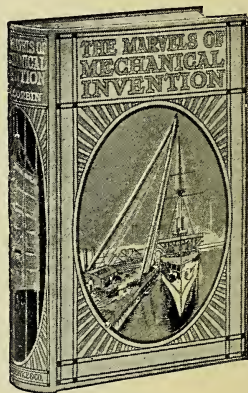
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